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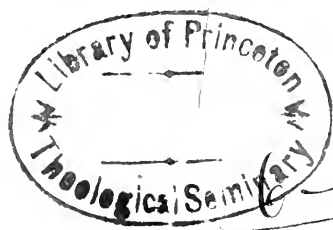
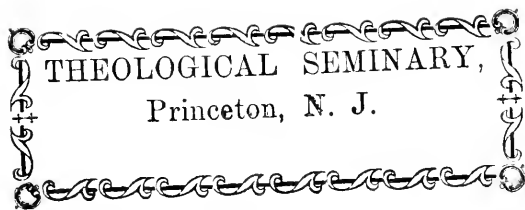
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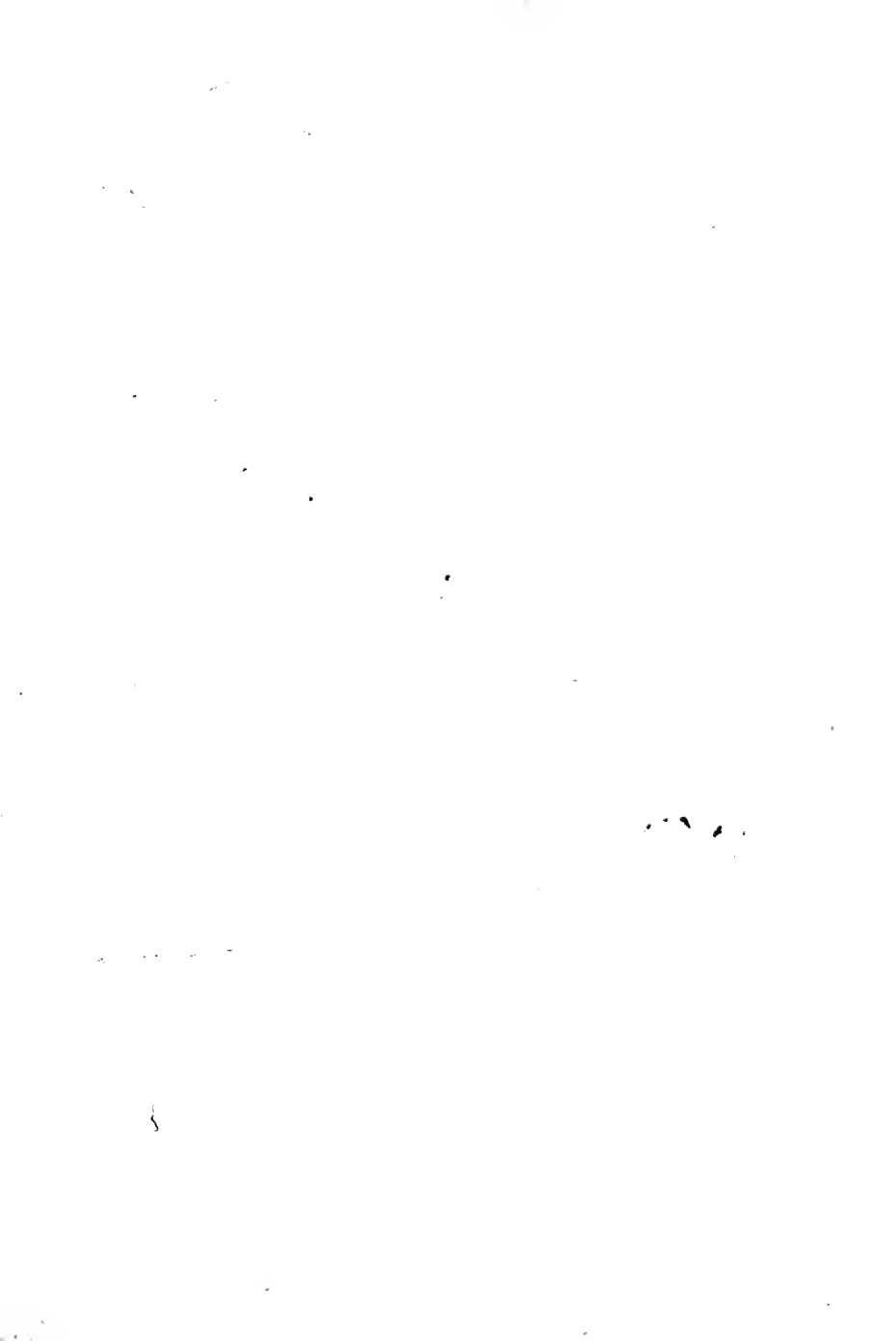
ON

The LETTER from *Aristocles* to *Authades*,

Touching

A PROMISE of *special Grace* to the
UNREGENERATE.





Vindication of Gospel-Truth,
AND
Refutation of some dangerous Errors,

In Relation to that important QUESTION, *Whether there be PROMISES of the Bestowment of special Grace, made in Scripture to the UNREGENERATE, on Condition of any Endeavours, Strivings, or Doings of theirs whatsoever?*

CONTAINING

A *Reply* to what the Author of a late LETTER from *Aristocles* to *Authades*, has offer'd on the *Affirmative* Side of the Question, with a View to invalidate the Arguments advanc'd by the Rev. Mr. COOKE (of *Stratfield*) in his printed *Sermon* in Favour of the *Negative*.

DONE

In a LETTER

To the Rev. Dr. SAMUEL JOHNSON, Episcopal Missionary at *Stratford*.

By JEDIDIAH MILLS, A. M.

Pastor of a Church at *Ripton* in *Stratford*.

BOSTON: N. E.

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A

Prefatory Epistle

TO THE

R E A D E R.

I T is no rare or uncommon Thing, that religious Disputes spend themselves on meer Circumstantial; Things, that 'tis of little Importance, on which Side of the Question, the Truth is found, as to them. And for that Reason they are often pass'd over by wise Men, as not worthy of any close Attention or warm Debate.---But the Case is otherwise in the Controversy now before us; the Subject whereof is not any light Matter, or bare Circumstantial of Christianity: But 'tis one of the great Things of the Gospel; nothing less than wherein the Nature and Extent of the Gospel it self, and New Covenant, therein revealed, consists.— So that on what Side of this Debate, the Truth lies, there lies the Covenant of Grace, and real Gospel of Jesus Christ: But, on the other Side lies another Covenant, and another Gospel, as to this Particular, a Covenant of Man's own devising, a Gospel such as Divine Revelation knows nothing of.

We, on the one Hand, readily own, that the New Covenant promises eternal Life to unfeigned Faith, Repentance, Love, &c. And in a Word, to all Obedience thence arising; which in a Gospel-Sense is termed, Good Works, Fruits of Righteousness, &c. But then (as is observed in the following Papers) we are expressly taught by the Holy Ghost, that none such can be performed by us, previous to our Regeneration.

Moreover, it is readily acknowledged by us, that the Encouragement given to all, to whom the Gospel is publish'd, to labour after a saving Compliance therewith. is great; and such as by an infinite Wisdom is suted to the State of the fallen Creature: But still, short of a Promise, ascertaining the Success of his Endeavours
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so as that, whenever first Grace, or saving Conversion, is bestowed, it should be in the Way of GOD's performing a Covenant Obligation, he had graciously laid himself under, on Condition of any Seekings, Strivings, or Doings of the Sinner.

What Dr. Johnson and those with him on the other Side, advance, is, That GOD has graciously obliged himself in the New Covenant, not only to bestow eternal Life on the sincerely Penitent, or Godly (as above) but also to bestow his special, effectual Grace on the Unregenerate, upon Condition of certain Endeavours put forth by them, whilst under the Dominion and Guilt of Sin. — So that the Controversy here plainly respects the Nature and Extent of the New-Covenant. — 'Tis therefore of the same Importance, that we rightly understand what Truth is in this Point, as that we rightly understand what the Covenant of Grace is. — Nor is it possible the Sinner should know in what Form or Manner he may hope successfully to address the Divine Majesty by Prayer for the Bestowment of special Grace, but by rightly understanding the Nature and Extent of the New Covenant, in regard of this Particular. — For if special Grace be given only in Pursuance of a Covenant-Engagement, or in the Way of performing some Promise of GOD, made to certain Doings of the unconverted Sinner, then doubtless it must be a very wrong Method for the Sinner to seek it otherwise, than in the Way of Covenant-Right, or Claim, by having performed those Things to which it is graciously promised: Because that would be to seek it out of GOD's covenanted Way of bestowing it. Whereas, on the other Hand, if it be given merely in the Way of Sovereignty, and not at all, in the Way of GOD's performing any gracious Promise of his, made to the Doings of the Sinner, then it must be very wrong for the Sinner to seek it as a Blessing promis'd him, to which he has or may have a Covenant-Right by any Doings of his, in his unregenerate State: Because that would be to seek it in an Anti-Scriptural Way, a Way in which GOD hath never by any Engagement of his given him the least Encouragement to expect the Bestowment of it. — And if this latter be the Case, it must then certainly follow, that all Pretence of preaching the Gospel of Christ, under this Head of urging Sinners upon seeking after renewing Grace as promised to their own Doings, is so far from preaching the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, as that 'tis in Reality a perverting the Gospel, or preaching contrary to it: And is so much worse than nothing, in this Particular, as the Traveller's being directed to a wrong Road, is worse than no Direction at all; because, that, instead of forwarding his Journey, at least greatly retards it.

To speak plainly here, such is the Tenor of the New Covenant, according to the Doctr. (if I understand him at all) that the Sinner, which receives the special Grace of GOD for the Renovation of his Nature to Holiness, receives it as much in the Way of Covenant Right, by his Works, whilst Unregenerate, as the Saint in Christ Jesus receives the Reward of future Glory by a Covenant Right, arising from a Compliance with Gospel-Terms.

Such a Scheme of the Covenant as this (I acknowledge) I have never yet been able to see in the Holy Scriptures. — And therefore, I have endeavoured in the following Sheets (as far what has been thought sufficient, is replied to the Doctor's Letter) to evince from various Arguments, that this Notion of the New Covenant is nearly humane, what neither is, nor can be divine, according to the Revelation, which GOD has given us of his Mind and Will.

It may perhaps be expected, that I make some Apology for my publishing this Reply to the Doctor's Letter, as it appears now out of Season; not only because, it is
some

some Time since his Letter came abroad ; but especially because it hath already received a sufficient Answer from the Rev. Mr. Dickinson ; after which it may be thought, nothing further can be needful.——

I would say then, 1st. That when I entered upon this Affair, it was with a View, that the Dr's Letter was not like to receive any Answer at all.——And therefore, though I knew my self one of the least among my Brethren, and by no Means able to give the Cause that full Advantage, which Truth would allow : Yet taking it to be the Cause of GOD, and of common Concernment, I was willing to do my Part in the Defence of it ; even as the least of the King's Subjects ought not to stand by and see the Interest of his Prince suffer, without attempting what is in his Power to defend it. Thus was I induced to make the present Attempt.——
And,

2dly. Though the Sufficiency of Mr. Dickinson's Reply be fully conceded, as to be sure it is by me : Nevertheless, doubtless, this will be allowed by all, that however well Error is remonstrated against, and Truth vindicated by one, yet still the same Thing being done by another Hand in a different Manner, tends to Confirmation : And usually carries this Advantage with it, viz. That some who did not so clearly see Truth in the former Representation, will more clearly discern it in the latter : And that, even, when the latter is greatly inferior to the former ; which I am sensible is the present Case ; and yet I conceive it possible, that even this Mearns may serve the better to accomodate what is said, to the Understanding and Acceptation of the more Illiterate. Upon this View, together with other Considerations, I have by the Importunity of Friends, been prevailed on to consent, that the following Sheets (which indeed for some Time have lain by) might be made publick.

As to the Manner of composing, I am not insensible, that the same Things, with some Variation of Expression, are once and again repeated in several Places of this Performance ; which, though naturally distasteful to the polite and discerning Reader, will (I hope) be easily overlook'd, since 'twas cut of a compassionate Design thereby of accomodating Things better to the weakest Understanding ; that so, if possible, every Capacity might be reach'd with a Conviction of Truth.

As to any Thing of Peremptoriness of Expression made Use of by me in this Debate, all that I would be understood thereby to signify, is, that those Things, in the Writing of them, to me appear'd considerably clear : Not that I expect that this Manner of Expression should be of any further Influence with the Reader, than the Evidence of Truth, with which it is accompanied, justly requires.——

If any Thing of undue Warmth or Harshness of Language towards the Rev. Dr. Johnson, if any Thing of that Kind beyond what the Nature of the Cause, and the Defence of Truth required, and what Christianity it self will vindicate, shall be found in the following Debate, to have dropt from my Pen, it is what I have not upon a cool Reflection been able to observe, and shall readily retract any such Instance, upon being convinc'd hereof.

Though I pretend not to an Exemption of what I have here wrote, from much of Weakness and humane Frailty ; yet this, I trust, I may say with good Assurance, that so far as I am conscious to my own Vices and Designs, I have done it for the Sake of what I really believe will be found at last to be divine Truth ; and with

with an Aim (so far as it may please GOD to bless my weak Endeavours) to prevent, at least in some Measure, an Inundation of (what are commonly called) Pelagian and Arminian Errors ; which, to my best Observation, have a very threatening Aspect on the dear Churches of God in this Land, and do speak their Danger, of being sooner or later carried off, at least in some essential Points, from the Gospel of Christ (which our Fathers valued above all their worldly Interests, and which they brought over into this Wilderness, and left as a precious Legacy to their Posterity) even to the receiving another Gospel.

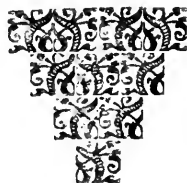
In fine, All I shall request of the Reader, is, that you would peruse with Candour, and an unbiass'd Aim at Truth ; compare what is here said, with the public Confessions of Faith, especially with the Articles and Homilies of the Church of England, but above all with the Holy Scriptures, weighing it in the Ballance of the Sanctuary : And if in any Thing you find it contrary to GOD's Word, reject it ; but so far as you find it agreeable to that sacred Standard, receive and embrace it. And may the Father of Lights and of Mercies guide you into a saving Acquaintance with all Truth, sanctify you by, and establish your Heart in the Truth, for Jesus Sake. Amen.

Thus wishes and prays

Your Soul-Friend,

and humble Servant,

J. MILLS.





A LETTER to the Rev. Dr. JOHNSON, &c.

Rev. Sir,

HAVING been requested by a Friend, to make such Remarks on that Part of your late Performance, intituled, *A LETTER from Aristocles to Authades*, which relates to the Promises, as to me might appear necessary, for the Vindication of some of the great and precious Truths of the Gospel; and having taken said Letter, in that Part, under Consideration, it appears to me most unexceptionable, in a Matter of so great Importance, as that of the Cause of GOD, wherein (as you acknowledge) the eternal Salvation of Souls is very nearly concerned, to appear open and free: and as I trust, you will find me equally far from a disputatious Temper, as you profess your self to be, so I hope I shall find my self, by your own Example, secured of a kind and candid Acceptance. Therefore I shall, without any further Apology, address my self to you, Sir, in what I have to offer on this Head.

Now that our Readers may have a clear Understanding of this Matter, I think it proper to be noticed, that what gave Occasion to your Letter, was a Sermon published by the Rev. Mr. Cooke of Stratfield, in Vindication of the Sovereignty of GOD, in the Dispensation of his special Grace to lost Sinners, on *Exod. xxxiii. 18*. In the Improvement of which Sermon it is inferred, *That there are no Promises of special Grace made unto any Doings of the Unregenerate, by the Performance of which they might become intituled to it.* Accordingly your Letter consists of two Parts; the Former on the Sovereignty of GOD, the Latter on the Promises. It is the Latter, that I am here principally concerned with.

Having finished the former Head of Discourse, you introduce the latter in the following Words. Pag. 22. *Indeed you was then only undertaking to prove, that there are no Promises in the Scripture to the Unregenerate; [meaning by the Unregenerate, those (whether baptized, or not) who are under the Dominion and Guilt of Sin.]*

Here, that I may proceed with the greater Clearness, I shall

I. State the *Question*.

II. Consider what is offer'd by you to *invalidate* the Rev. Mr. Cooke's Arguments advanced in his *Sermon*, in Favour of the *Negative* Side of the *Question*.

III. Consider what you have offer'd in Confirmation of the *Affirmative*. And then,

IV. Suggest a few Things to Consideration which serve, among many others, to persuade me, that the Truth lies on the *Negative* Side.

According to this Method, I am

I. To *State the Question*.----Now in Order to this it may be observed, That the *Question* between Mr. Cooke and you is not, *Whether there be any Promises in the Bible?* Which you seem, wildly enough, to insinuate. (Page 21, 22, 23.)---Nor is it,

Whether there are any conditional Promises made to Sinners in the Scriptures?

Neither is it, *Whether it be the Sinner's indispensable Duty, in the Use of appointed Means, earnestly to seek after the Attainment of special Grace?*---Nor yet,

Whether God's Bestowment of special Grace upon Sinners be ordinarily in the Way of the Sinners diligent, earnest, and painful Endeavours, in the Use of appointed Means? Nor,

Whether the Encouragement Sinner's have, in the Gospel, to hope that Success may attend their thus seeking, be very great and precious?

Nor yet,

Whether the Sinner's Encouragement to hope for the Success of his Endeavours, rises in Proportion to his Diligence and Painfulness in the Use of appointed Means?---None of all these properly belong to the Controversy in Hand.

You do indeed, Sir, charge Mr. Cooke, in some of his Expressions, with denying there are any *Promises* at all in the Scripture, Page 22. But yet at the same Time you are oblig'd to confess, *That he was only undertaking to prove there were no Promises, in the Scripture, to the Unregenerate.* So that it is evident, you did not really understand him to mean, what you insinuate his Words speak.

But to come directly to the Case.---

The *Question* properly now before us is, *Whether there be Promises of the Bestowment of special Grace, made in the Scripture to unregenerate Sinners, on Condition of any Endeavours, Strivings, or Doings of theirs, whatsoever?* or, which amounts to much the same,

Whether

Whether God bestows special Grace on the Unregenerate, in the Way of performing a Covenant-Promise, made to any Doings of theirs whatsoever ; allowing that Promise, both as to the Matter and Being of it, to be of meer Grace ?

The Question being thus fairly stated, the Business is brought into a narrow Compass ; and had you proved either of these, both had readily been granted : But Nothing of this Nature hath hitherto been found in your *Letter*. You do indeed, once and again, insist upon it, *That in the final Retributions to be awarded to Men in the Life to come, God acts as a righteous Judge of the Behaviour of his Creatures, and rewards or punishes according to Stipulation ; and that in this grand Affair absolute Sovereignty has no Place.* Pag. 6, 20.---And who of us ever entertained one single Thought to the contrary ? What therefore, Sir, you would be at, in insisting so much on this Point, I am unable to conceive ; unless you would hereby insinuate to the World, that the Rev. Author of that *Sermon*, refer'd to in your *Letter*, is of a contrary Mind, and if so, you had done well to produce your Evidence.--- Or,

Can it once be imagined, that because God acts as a Judge in the final Retributions to be awarded to Men, at the Day of Judgment, therefore he acts as a Judge also in the Bestowment of effectual Grace here in this World, while in a State of Probation ? Where is the Connection between these Things ? Especially, since you concede, *That God is entirely sovereign and arbitrary as a Benefactor in the Distribution of his Talents and Favours, both spiritual and temporal, as proper Means of Trial and Probation in this World, i. e. (say you) the various Abilities, Capacities, Priviledges and Advantages he bestows on Mankind : He is intirely at Liberty (meaning as to these Things) to do what he will with his own.* Pag. 6.--- Now is not special Grace, bestowed on Men in this World, a *Favour*, a *Priviledge*, and an *Advantage* to those on whom it is bestowed ? And is it not a precious *Talent*, given for Improvement, as a proper Means of Trial and Probation here ? Especially since, according to your own Notion of Things, *it may be, and oftentimes is lost for want of Improvement, and it's Avail to the eternal Salvation of any one, is intirely owing to a due Improvement.* ---- So that I see not, but that according to your own Account, taken in your own Words, the great God is Lord of his own, with Respect as well to the Bestowment of special Grace, as other spiritual Priviledges and Talents dispensed to Men under the Gospel.----

If you say, *Nay*, but God bestows special Grace, not as a *Benefactor*, but as a *Righteous Judge* of the Behaviour of his Creatures,

I answer, This is the Thing you should have proved ; and had you done *this*, instead of explaining *your Way of thinking* so largely, you had done something to the Purpose : but so long as this is not done, you have really done just Nothing. For it is not Acquaintance with your Way of thinking, which we want ; but Evidence, that your Way of thinking is grounded upon the *Word of God*.

Moreover, it appears to me, you have abundantly conceded, that God acts as a *Benefactor* in the Bestowment of special Grace, when in Pag. 8. you grant that *Every Thing beyond what is just sufficient to render Being desirable, even to a perfect Creature how obedient soever, is Matter of meer sovereign Goodness, in which God may go into what Variety he pleases : Much more (say you) must the whole System of the Gospel to fallen Man be Matter of meer sovereign free Grace.*---- Now if the whole System of the Gospel bestow'd on fallen Man, in this State of Probation, be, in an eminent Degree, Matter of *meer sovereign free Grace*, because it goes far beyond what is just sufficient to render Being desirable, Why is not the Bestowment of *special Grace* on some of the fallen Race, in this State of Probation, at least in an equal Degree, Matter of *meer sovereign free Gift* ? Is not the Bestowment of *special Grace* on some of the fallen Race, at least as much beyond what is just sufficient to render Being desirable, as the System of the Gospel ; since the former is the End, and Design of the latter ?---- Again,

You acknowledge, that *common Grace* is given of God, as a *Benefactor* ; your Words are, *absolutely given in Christ to all*, Page 25. By which I presume you intend, *Given in a Way of Sovereignty, by an absolute Proprietor*. And if so, then I ask, Since God bestows *common Grace* as a *sovereign Benefactor*, why not *special Grace* too ? Seeing according to you, *special* and *common Grace* differ in *Degree* only, not in *Kind* ; so that all that is necessary in Order to render *common Grace*, where it is bestowed on any, *special*, is only the Addition of some further Degrees of the same *Kind*. And since you grant, that God bestows some *Degrees* of *common Grace*, as a *Benefactor*, in the Way of *Sovereignty*, How does it appear, that God never *adds* such further *Degrees* of the same *Kind*, as are necessary to render it *special*, in the same Way of *Sovereignty* ? Especially since you grant, as above, that *What is beyond what is just sufficient to render Being desirable, ---- God may go into what Variety he pleases*. i. e. There is no Objection justly lying against it (according to you) if God pleases to add those further Degrees of the same *Kind*, that are necessary to render *common Grace*, where it is bestowed, *special*.

But still more express, if it be possible, is what you say in Page 5, 6.

5, 6. where you tell us ; *In Order to think clearly on this Subject, --- it seems, to you, very necessary to distinguish between the Consideration of God as a Benefactor, and as a Judge : And between the Bestowment of various Talents and Favours upon Men in this Life, which is a State of Probation, and the Retributions to be awarded in the Life to come, according to what Use they shall have made of them here. In the one (i. e. in the Bestowment of various Talents and Favours upon Men in this Life, you say) God acts as a sovereign Lord of his Favours : In the other, as a righteous Judge.* Now is it not certain that the Bestowment of *special Grace* belongs to the State of *Probation* in this Life, and not to the State of *Retribution* in the Life to come ? And is it not certain, that those endowed with this precious *Talent* here, will receive a *Reward* in the Life to come, according to their *Improvement* here ? And if so, then, Is it not certain, according to your own Distinction, that God acts as a *Benefactor*, and not as a *Judge* in the Bestowment of it ? So that, by your own express Declarations, you seem intirely to have given up the Question.---- However, I shall now proceed, according to what I have proposed,

II. To consider what *you have offered* to invalidate Mr. Cooke's Arguments, advanced in Favour of the *Negative Part* of the Question. Where it is observable, after you have proposed the Question, as above, your first Attack is by way of Query, thus ; *But, pray Sir, how did you prove it ? Why by this Argument ; " If God had bound himself " by his Promise, to any of his Creatures, he is no more at perfect " Liberty, either to grant, or with-hold the promised Blessing, as " may please him."*----Now (say you) *surely if this Argument proves any Thing, it proves that no Promise at all, to Good, or Bad, is consistent with the divine Sovereignty ; and so on.*----

Here, Sir, you must have Patience with me, whilst I attempt to set this Matter in a true Light ; because, I apprehend, you have at least, when we have made the best of it, here committed a *Blunder*, and then made your own Mistake the intire Ground of your breaking out into some warm Reflections upon the Rev. Mr. Cooke, Author of the *Sermon* referr'd to ; as excluding the *New Covenant*, and contemning the *holy Scriptures*, as an *utterly senseless and unmeaning Thing*. P. 21, 22. An awful Charge this ! and still more so to him that brings it against another, if founded intirely on his own *Mistake*. Now, in order to set this Matter in a clear View, it may not be amiss, to take Notice, that the Argument quoted by you is fetcht from the *Author's Improvement* of that Subject, in the Way of *Inference*, viz : " That " it is a great *Mistake*, and of very dangerous Consequence, which " many carnal Persons under the Light of the Gospel fall into, who " will

“ will persuade themselves, that they are *able* (with the common Concurrence of divine Providence in upholding their Beings and Faculties) to *do that* which hath a certain *Connection* with, or which shall *assuredly issue in*, their *Conversion* and eternal Salvation.” (*Serm. Pag. 16.*) That is, as the *Author* abundantly explains himself, throughout the following Part of that Discourse, “ They persuade themselves, that they are able to *do that*, which will *intitle* them to certain *Promises* of the Bestowment of *effectual Grace*.”--- And having said several Things for the Illustration of this Point, he at length argues in this Form, *viz* : “ If God be a *Sovereign* Dispenser of his saving Graces and Favours, and may grant or with-hold them, according to his *meer good Pleasure*, as I have endeavoured before to shew ; then Sinners in their *natural State* have no *Claim* to the *Promises*.”---The Form of Reasoning here made use of, is plainly that of an *hypothetick* Syllogism.----The *Assumption*, or Minor Proposition, *viz*: “ *That God is a sovereign Dispenser of his saving Grace, and may give, or with-hold it, according to his meer good Pleasure,*” This the *Author* intimates he had before made good. The *Consequence* is clear and undeniable, *viz*. “ *That if God be a Sovereign Dispenser of his saving Grace to Sinners, may grant, or with-hold it, according to his meer good Pleasure, then, Sinners have no Claim to it by gracious Promises made by God to any Doings of theirs.*”

Now the whole Design of the *Author* in the Use of those Words (quoted by you) was to confirm this *Consequence* ; and lay open the *Inconsistency* there is, between God’s bestowing saving Grace on the Sinner, in the way of *sovereign free Favour*, as being at perfect *Liberty*, either to grant, or with-hold it, according to his *meer good Pleasure*,---And his acting herein at the same time in the Character of a Judge or Rewarder, *obliged* by his *Promises* to the Doings of the Sinner. And the Words fully answer the Purpose, for which they were used : for if God once makes a *Promise* to his Creatures, he is no more at perfect *Liberty*, whether to grant, or with-hold the promised Blessing. So that the *Inconsistency* between these two is equal to that of the same Person’s being *bound* and *free*, at the same Time, and in the same Respect : Things impossible in Nature, opposite States, Contraries, that can never agree to one and the same Person. So that if one of these be *true*, the other must necessarily be *false*. Thus it is evident, the Words you quote, do fully prove what they were brought to prove.

Now instead of properly denying any Part of the Argument, or discovering any Weakness in it, you only with great Assurance affirm

firm, that *surely if this Argument proves any Thing, it proves that no Promise at all, to Good or Bad, is consistent with the Divine Sovereignty: and then where is there any Place for any New Covenant, or indeed Old either? And if the Case be so (say you) away with the Bible sure enough!* and so on.

But pray, Sir, think a little, whether you have Truth with you, in what you here affirm. You say, *If this Argument proves any Thing, it proves that no Promise at all, to Good or Bad, is consistent with the divine Sovereignty.*---With your Leave, Sir, Had you here justly and carefully distinguished, and said, This Argument proves, that no Promise at all to Good or Bad, is consistent with absolute Sovereignty, in Respect to conferring the Good promised: *i. e.* That there-in God acts not as a Sovereign, at perfect Liberty, to grant, or to with-hold the Good promised; because, in that Particular, he hath obliged himself by his gracious Promise: you had expressed your self much more agreeable to the Truth. This is what that Argument was brought to prove, and undeniably does prove.---But, Dear Sir, How does this exclude the New Covenant, or not leave any Place for it? or how does it condemn the Sacred Scriptures, as a *meer Imposture, a meer Farce, and utterly a senseless and unmeaning Thing?* Had you, Sir, kept to Truth in this Instance, you had saved all those hard Speeches, with which you fill up a great Part of three Pages together. (p. 21, 22, 23.)

However, granting, this Argument proves, as is above conceded, yet how does it from hence appear, that *no Promise, to Good or Bad, is so consistent with the divine Sovereignty, as to allow any Place for New Covenant, or Old either, or the Being of any Promises at all!* This is what you confidently enough affirm, that the Argument proves, if it proves any Thing. But this is your own grand Mistake: you have, in this particular, evidently gone beyond the Truth. How do you infer, that *if God's obliging himself by gracious Promises, to any of his Creatures, be inconsistent with his being at Liberty to grant or with-hold the Thing promised, then it is inconsistent also with his making any Promises at all, or entering into any Covenant at all!* I can't see how God's being obliged by his Promises, when made to any of his Creatures, and so not being at Liberty to perform, or not perform them, as he pleaseth, does in the least militate against the Being of any Promises at all, or subvert the New Covenant.

Further,

Are not the Author's Words, which you quote, and call *this Argument*, most evidently true? Nay, are they not so true, as that, from Reason, Scripture, and the Attributes of God, it is impossible they

they should be otherwise than true? For if a *Promise* made to another be, in it's own Nature, *binding*, and God be a God of *Truth*, who *cannot lie*, then it is impossible but that, if God makes a *Promise* to any of his Creatures, it must be binding, and his *Truth* obliges him to Performance. Which is the Sum total of what is contained in the Author's Words. And if so, how was it possible, Sir, that you should make (shall I say ?) such dreadful Work, with a plain, rational, scriptural *Truth*, as on the Account thereof, to throw out those black Imputations on the Rev. *Author* ! However, I charitably hope and believe that all this, in you, arises from nothing worse than a gross Mistake, and may be imputed to a too hasty Proceeding, without clear Ideas. Yet in Faithfulness to the Cause of *Truth*, and to you, Rev. Sir, I must observe, 'tis evidently such a Mistake as is very *blame-worthy*, and scarce excusable.---And that,

1. Because on this *Mistake* alone you evidently ground all those censorious, and *unchristian Reflections* you make on the Rev. Mr. Cooke, in your Letter, *Pag. 21, 22, 23*. Where you represent him as one *flying in the Face of the whole Scriptures* ; *denying any Promises at all* ----*destroying the very Being of the New Covenant* ----*and by Consequence, of the whole Design, and Purport of all revealed Religion* ! This you confess is a *heavy Charge*, and grieve over the Gentleman's having brought it upon himself, and then resolve all into this, as the Means by which he has done it, *viz. his having asserted, that, If God had once bound himself by his Promise to any of his Creatures, he is no more at perfect Liberty either to grant or withhold the promised Blessing, as may please him, but is inviolably holden by his own Promise.* A *Truth*, as evident both from *Scripture* and *Reason* (and as innocently asserted) as any other *Truth* in the whole Book of God : And yet, by some unknown Art of yours, the Rev. Author must be thus blackned ! How is it possible for Innocence it self to escape, where men will allow themselves in such Treatment of one another ?

2. Another Aggravation attending this Mistake, is, that it was committed in a Case so exceeding *plain* and *easy* ; that it is scarce conceivable, how any one unprejudic'd and duly disposed (though but of a common Capacity) should fall into it.---Had the Case required uncommon Sagacity, deep Penetration, or accurate Discerning, in order to distinguish between God's Promises obliging him so as to be inconsistent with his being at perfect Liberty, either to perform or not perform them, *when made*, and their obliging him so as to be inconsistent with their *being made at all*,---the Mistake had been

been much more excusable. But since those Ideas are, not only distinct, but very manifestly so, it is hardly conceivable, how any one should imagine such a Connexion, or so near a Relation between them, as that the one should be infer'd from the other ; which is the present Case.

To conclude this Particular, though I am resolved, so far as possible, consistent with Truth, to be on the charitable Side : Yet I can do no less than refer it to your own serious Consideration, whether it be not evidently from your own intire *Mistake*, at least, that you charge all those frightful Things mentioned on the Rev. Author : And if you find this to be the Case, I would charitably hope, you will give the World Conviction by your Practice, as well as by your Words (Page 1.) *That you desire nothing more, than to know the Truth, that you may be governed by it.*

You go on to produce some Proof, *that there are Promises, in the Scriptures* : what no one, I suppose, ever denied. You appeal to any Man of common Sense, that reads the *Bible* carefully, whether there be not *Promises* in it : And then very gravely quote 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. to prove the Point. Here I shall only appeal, with you, to any Man of common Sense, whether this Management be not trifling, and unworthy a grave Divine ? But you carry on your Appeal still further, and expostulate, “ *Whether it be not manifestly the Design and Tendency of the whole Scriptures, from the Beginning to the End, to inculcate these two Points, viz. To put Mankind upon the most vigorous Activity in seeking and pursuing their everlasting Happiness ; and then to ascertain to them Success in so doing ?* “ Is it not (say you) one of the first Things you read in *Genesis*, after the Fall (4. 7.) *If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted ?* And the last in *Revelations* (22. 14) *Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have a Right to the Tree of Life ?*

I answer, If these qualifying Words, viz. *through well-doing*, be added, either expressly or implicitly, to your Propositions, they are both true, and can be made good from the Scriptures : otherwise they are both false ; for the Scripture no where puts Mankind upon seeking their everlasting Happiness, or ascertains them Success in the Pursuit, in any other Way than that of *Well-doing*, truly such in the Account of God, *i. e.* Doing his Commandments ; which being thus understood (as certainly they must be, in order either to their being true, or there being any Pertinency in the Texts brought for their Proof) what is there in them to your Purpose ? Will the Consequence hold good, That, because God has promised *eternal Life* to those, who do his Commandments (who in the Way of *Well-doing*

seek for Glory) Therefore he has promised the Bestowment of *special Grace*, to the Doings of the *Unregenerate*, that are under the Guilt and Dominion of Sin ?

How then you should once imagine (if really you did so) that these *Texts* had any Reference to the Question in Hand, is beyond me to conceive : unless it should be supposed, that *well-doing* in the Account of God, or (which is the same) *Doing his Commandments*, so as to have *Right to the Tree of Life*, is what agrees to the *Unregenerate*, under the Guilt and Dominion of Sin : which certainly none will pretend to.

Besides, Is it not exceeding clear from the Occasion and Design of those Words, quoted from *Gen. 4. 7.* (if intended in a Gospel-Sense) That by *well-doing* there must be meant Nothing short of Compliance with the *New Covenant*, presenting Services, and Offerings to the blessed God with a Respect had to the *Mediator*, by *Faith*, for their *Acceptance* ? And is it not expressly witnessed by the Holy Ghost (in *Heb. 11. 4.*) That by *Faith* Abel offer'd a more excellent Sacrifice than Cain ? And if so, is it not certain that Cain's not offering his Sacrifice in *Faith* was his *doing not well*, so that *Sin lay at the Door*, and stood in the Way of God's gracious *Acceptance* ? Is it not also abundantly evident, that the Design of the Lord's Reasoning with Cain, wherein these Words are made Use of, was to point out to him his own *Sin*, as the true Ground of that *Difference* (whereat he was much offended) made by the holy God, between his Sacrifice and his Brother's, in point of *Acceptance* ; And thereby to set before him Matter of Conviction, that his *Anger* against God, and against his Brother, was intirely groundless ?--- And the Lord said unto Cain, *Why art thou wroth ? And why is thy Countenance fallen ? If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted ?* i. e. (according to good Expositors) If thou hadst *done well*, as thy Brother did, thou shouldst have been *accepted* as he was, viz. If thou hadst offer'd thy Sacrifice in *Faith*, with an Eye to the *Mediator* for *Acceptance*, thou hadst been equally *accepted* of God with thy Brother. And if thou dost not well, *Sin lieth at the Door*, i. e. If through the Pride of thine Heart, not duly considering thy own Sinfulness, or the infinite Purity of my Nature, and that the Way of Life by the first Covenant, the Way of *immediate* Approach to, and *Acceptance* with God, by any Services or Offerings whatsoever, is by Man's Apostacy intirely and for ever shut up, and awfully guarded by a Band of Angels, and a flaming Sword, that turns every Way to keep the Way of the *Tree of Life*, i. e. that Way of Life by Man's *Doing the Law*, or personal Obedience, the *Doing* in order to Life proposed

posed in the *first Covenant*, which (it seems) the Use of the *Tree of Life*, as a Sacrament of that Covenant, was design'd to ratify and confirm, and that the only Way now of Approach to, and Acceptance with an infinitely holy God, for the fallen Creature, is by *Faith* in the *Mediator*; If thus arrogantly, in thy own Self-sufficiency, thou hast presumed to approach unto God, and present thy Offering in a meer moral or legal, and *immediate* Way, and not by *Faith* in the *Mediation* of the promised *Seed*, in this *thou hast done not well*, so that *Sin lieth at the Door*: this thy *Unbelief* binds *Sin* upon thee, exposes thee to Punishment, and is a Bar in the Way of any the least Expression of my *Respect* to thee or thy Offering. And of these Things you have had proper Notice, as well as your Brother: therefore if after all you will dare thus presumptuously to approach me in this antiquated *legal* Way, and not in the *new* and *living* Way, through a *Mediator*, you can blame only your own Folly for the Disappointment you are angry at.

Now that this is the plain Meaning of these Expressions, construed in an Evangelical Sense, and in Analogy with the Christian Revelation, is evident. For,

1. It is certain, *Cain's Fault* in this Matter must be, at least especially, his *not* offering his Sacrifice in *Faith*, respecting the *Mediator*, the promised *Seed*.

2. It is certain, the Lord's *Design*, by Reasoning with him, in the Use of these Words, must be, to *point out* to him his *Fault*, in this Matter.

3. It is therefore certain, that these Expressions, *If thou dost not well*, must point out his Fault in *not* offering his Sacrifice in *Faith*, and consequently that the *doing Well*, spoken of as that upon which he should have been *accepted*, must mean his *offering his Sacrifice in Faith*: for if his *Unbelief* was that *not doing well*, whereby he failed of Acceptance, then his *Faith* must be that *doing well*, which would have secured his Acceptance. --- Upon the whole therefore, if by *doing well* here, as spoken of to *Cain*, be meant his complying with the *New Covenant*, approaching to God through a *Mediator*, and presenting his Offerings *in his Name*, and if this be evidently connected with his *Acceptance* with God, or his having Right to any the least Expression of God's *Favour*, How is it possible by this *Text* to prove, or from it justly to insinuate, That the *Unregenerate*, under the Guilt and Dominion of Sin, i. e. Short of *Faith* in the *Mediator*, have a Right to the Bestowment of *special Grace*, by Virtue of some *Promise* made (though supposing it of meer Grace) to certain Doings of their own? --- Whether this be not to pervert this

Scripture

Scripture from it's true Meaning, I refer to all impartial and judicious Readers.

But it is especially wonderful to me, Sir, when you seemed to fetch so large a Compass, and carry the whole Scripture before you, from the Beginning of *Genesis* to the End of the *Revelation*, as tho' every Page and Line were on your Side of the Question, that on such a Survey of the whole sacred Canon you should fix on *this Text* in particular, as one most clear and full to your Purpose; a Text which, not only does not contain the least Shadow of a Hint in Favour of your Opinion, but is a clear and thining Testimony against it ! ---

For,

If the Performance of that *Duty*, which as to the *general Nature* of it, we are sure, and for any Thing the Scripture informs us, as to the *particular Circumstances* attending it (except the Want of *Faith*) was agreeable to the *Will of God*, was notwithstanding this *rejected* of God for the Want of *Faith*; What clearer Testimony can be given, *That God is obliged by no gracious Promises, to skew his special Favour to the fallen Creature, on any Condition, short of Faith in the Mediator*? Was not *Cain* by awful Experience convinced of this? And does not this Example contain Matter of more powerful Conviction, to all Mankind acquainted with it, than any Declaration by meer Words could do? Inasmuch as it is a Verification of what God has said, in the *last Verse* of the preceeding *Chapter*: Signifying, that God himself, as a consuming *Fire*, is engaged against any of the fallen Race's being entitled to his special Favour, by any Means whatsoever, short of *Faith in the Mediator*. But to proceed,

In the next Place you assert a *Right*, at least a *conditional Right* to certain Blessings, passed over to us by the Promises.---- "*What else (say you) can be made of them, but that God designed to pass over a Right, at least a conditional Right to his Creatures of what he promises them?* --- The *Matter* and the *Being of the Promises* indeed (you concede) are of *meer sovereign free Grace*; "*But surely (say you) notwithstanding this, when he has been graciously pleased to grant us these precious Promises, it must have been his Design to pass over a Right to us of the Blessings promised, i. e. a conditional Right.*

Here Sir, I must confess my self unable, with any Certainty, to fix on your Meaning: And while this is the Case, it is impossible for me to determine, what I should think proper to reply, in Case the Meaning of what is said were ascertain'd. However, while by this loose Manner of dealing in doubtful Generals, we are left incapable of making a pertinent Reply, with any Certainty, to what is intended: Yet at the same Time we are secured, that such Man-
ner

ner of Dealing can never prove any Thing against or hurt the Cause, that is thus opposed, except it be in the Minds of those, who are carried away by Sounds, without any determinate Ideas. Nevertheless to make the best Guess I can in the Case. ----

If, by a *conditional Right to the Blessings promised*, you mean a Right to *Grace and Glory, and every good Thing*, pass'd over to us in Case of an *upright Walk* before God, I readily grant it; and that this Right is given us on the Score of God's meer Grace in *Christ*. But if you mean (as I think you must, in Order to mean any Thing to your Purpose) by a *conditional Right to Blessings promised*, a Right to the Bestowment of *effectual converting Grace*, pass'd over to the *Unregenerate*, on Condition of certain Doings of *theirs*; in this Case you proceed on a false *Hypothesis*, and evidently take for granted, that very Point in Debate, and which you should have proved. "*In his Right therefore* (say you) *we must plead, who has purchased this Benefit for us, and not in the Virtue or Merit of any Thing we do, which we can only humbly consider as meer Qualifications, necessary to render us capable of receiving what God in Christ hath freely promised.---We must plead,---if you here mean pleading for the Bestowment of effectual converting Grace; and if by any Thing we do being considered only as meer Qualifications, &c. you mean something less than what hath in it the Nature of a Condition, What is this short of giving up the Question? For if there be no Conditions on Man's Part, then special Grace is not bestowed in the Way of God's performing his Promise to any Doings of the Sinner as such. But if, by our Doings being considered only as meer Qualifications, you mean something that hath in it the Nature of a Condition, to which a Promise of the Bestowment of effectual converting Grace is annexed, then where is the Injustice you charge upon the Author, for representing your Doctrine as asserting the Sinner's Right, arising from the Performance of such Condition, and his pleadable Claim thereupon to the Good promised?*"

Again, If, by *the Benefit purchased for us*, be meant a *conditional Right to eternal Salvation*, or the Gospel it self, and the Covenant-Promises therein, whence such conditional Right ariseth; it may safely be granted, that *Christ hath purchased this Benefit for us.---* But if, by *the Benefit purchased for us*, you mean, among other Things, a conditional Right to the Bestowment of *converting Grace*, pass'd over to the *Unregenerate*, in the Gospel-Promise, or a Right granted them on Condition of certain *Doings of theirs*, then what you have said in the above-quoted Passage is intirely to be set aside, as founded on a Supposition not true. The Being of the Sinner's Right to the Bestowment

bestowment of converting Grace, by Virtue of any Promises made to his own Doings or Endeavours, is the very Thing called in Question: and therefore I call it a *Supposition not true*, and till it be proved, must look upon it in that Light.

In a Word, what you have said above of a *Conditional Right passed over to us*, and of the *Benefit purchased for us*, was either meant to include in it the Idea of a conditional *Right* to the Bestowment of *converting* Grace, passed over to *unregenerate* Sinners, or not. If this be included, then, for the Reasons above, what you have said here is to be intirely set aside, together with that you have said of the View in which our *Doings* are humbly to be considered. But if *not*, then what you have there said, is nothing to the Purpose. And so I may pass on to consider the Grounds of what you further advance by Way of *Charge* against the Rev. Author, in the following Words---

"It was therefore (say you) *very unjust for you to put Things in such a ridiculous Light as you did, to talk of owing, claiming, challenging, &c.* No-Body ever dreamt of using such Language to God, which could not become an Angel, much less a fallen, sinful Creature, when the Matter, and indeed the very Being of the Promises is Matter of free Grace.

By Way of Reply here, I say,

1. It may be considered, that the Author, in making Use of these Expressions, was only designing to personate those of your Opinion, who maintain, that *converting Grace* is bestowed according to *Works* done by the *Unregenerate*, under the Dominion and Guilt of Sin, in the Way of God's performing his *Covenant-Engagements*, made to certain *Seekings* and *Strivings* of theirs. And now because the Author did not set himself to correct their several Ways of expressing their own Ideas in this Matter ;---as one, That by his *Endeavours* he was insured of the Bestowment of *effectual Grace* ; Another, That he was entitled, had a *Claim, or Right* :---A Third, That he was thereby *interested* ;---And some so bold in Expression, as to assert, That God had *promised to their Endeavours, and by their Endeavours they could therefore challenge* :---Because (I say) the Author did not enter into Dispute with this Sort of People, for their *assuming and challenging* Language, nor teach them in what Manner of Expression, Persons of that Opinion should address themselves to God, which did not at all belong to his Subject, but instead thereof endeavoured to convince them of the grand Error at Bottom, which was the mistaken Ground of all that Variety of bold Phrases made Use of by them ; therefore he is thus very *unjust*, in your Judgment : But, I charitably believe, not so on this Account, in any other Person's in all the World.

2. It is observable here, that what you condemn in the Author,

as *unjust* and *setting Things in a ridiculous Light*, is not the mentioning only of some *one* of these Expressions, but of such a *Variety*, and of some as well as others; as seems evident by your adding an &c. (Page 24.) Now had the Author mentioned only such Phrases as sounded most *harsh*, to express that Connexion between the Doings of the Unregenerate and the Bestowment of effectual Grace, maintained by those of your Opinion; or had you condemned only such Expressions, I had readily so far conceded. But since the Author makes Use of a great Variety of Expressions, and among others, of many of the *lowest* Sort, by which such Connexion can possibly be expressed, such as----the Sinner's being by his Endeavours *Insured, Assured, Intitled, Interested*; nay, "doing that which hath a *certain Connexion* with, or which shall *surely issue* in their Conversion." (Ser. Pag. 16, 17, &c.) And since you condemn, in the Author, the Use of these *lowest* Expressions, by which any *sure Connexion* between the Sinner's Endeavours, and the Bestowment of effectual Grace, can possibly be express'd; Is not this again entirely to give up the Question? For if the Use of the *lowest* Expressions, by which this *Connexion* can be express'd, is to be condemned as *very unjust*, and *putting of Things in a ridiculous Light*, it must be because there is indeed *no Connexion* between the Doings of the Unregenerate, and the Bestowment of effectual Grace: And if so, then *no Promises* made to these at all.

The Reason assign'd here, with a View to make this Charge good against the Author, is, *That the Matter, and indeed the very Being of the Promises, is Matter of free Grace*. But what Force of Argument does this carry with it? Have not you with your own Pen confuted this Reason, by what you say in your 23d Page? Where, having conceded, *That the Matter and Being of the Promises is of meer sovereign free Grace*, you subjoin, "*But surely notwithstanding this, when he has been pleased to grant us these precious Promises, it must have been his Design to pass over a Right to us of the Blessings promised.*"

Now,

That the *Matter and Being of the Promises* being Matter of meer Grace should in pag. 23. be no Reason at all, why a Right should not pass by such Promises, and yet be assigned as a good Reason (in p. 24) to censure the Author you have in Dealing, as *very unjust*, and *ridiculing your Doctrine*, while representing it as asserting a *Right passed by such Promises*; this must, I think, be placed among the Inconsistencies of your Letter.----So very difficult a thing is it, for any one, in the Defence of Error, constantly to speak the same Things! And when this is the Case, it must necessarily be equally difficult for the Reader

der to fix upon the true Meaning of such an Author ; or indeed for his Answerer to confute what is said in one Page, and not at the same Time confirm what is said in another.----You close the Paragraph before us with a summary Reflection : “ *Considering Things in this Light* [i. e. as the Matter, and indeed the very Being of the Promises, is Matter of meer Grace] *then what Sense is there in your Categorical Syllogism, and all your other Reasonings on this Subject?*” Where you professedly offer a View of the Promises in *this Light*, as a sufficient *Refutation* of all that Mr. Cooke had said on this Subject in his Sermon. But the Weight and Force hereof having been already considered, I refer it to every impartial Judge.----And now pass on to what I further proposed,

III. To consider what you have offer'd in *Confirmation* of the *Affirmative* Part of the Question.

Thus the next Paragraph of your *Letter* begins.----*But still you insist upon it, that there is no Promise to the Unregenerate.*”---Meaning by the *Unregenerate* (as in pag. 22. you express your understanding of the Author) *those (whether baptized or not) who are under the Dominion and Guilt of Sin.*

Where, having said several Things, you demand of the *Author* to tell you, “ *if there be no Medium between an obstinate relentless Sinner, and one that is thoroughly regenerate, in his Sense of the Word?*” And having explained what you mean by a Sinner in a middle State, between the *Obstinate* and the *Regenerate*, viz. “ *One who is brought by the Assistance of common Grace---to be serious, and really solicitous for Salvation, so as being deeply sensible of his own Guilt and Weakness, earnestly to cry to God for Help, and strive in earnest that he may be qualified for God's Help.*”---Now (say you) *this is the Man to whom I say the Promises of divine efficacious Aid or special Grace do belong.* This is he *who hath, to whom shall be given, in our Saviour's Sense, Matth. 25. 29.*”---That is, such an awakened striving Sinner, though by your own Confession “ *not yet thoroughly converted from Sin to God,*” you say, *is the Man who hath, in our Saviour's Sense, where he saith, Unto every one that hath, shall be given, and he shall have Abundance.*

Here, since you confidently affirm your Opinion on the Place, though without advancing any the least Shadow of Proof, I shall take Leave to enquire into the Meaning of this *Text* : in Order to which, it may not be amiss to observe,

I. That the Scope and Design of the *Parable of the Talents*, to which this *Text* belongs, is evidently to shew, wherein our *Readers*

diness for Christ's coming to *Judgment* must consist ; and what will be the main *Inquiry* of the *great Day*, upon which the final Decision of our everlasting Fate will then turn, viz. whether we have done well, or ill, in the Account of the New Covenant ? whether we've been good and faithful Servants of the Lord, or wicked and slothful, in the Management of the *Talents*, with which we have been intrusted ?---

This doubtless will readily be granted by every impartial attentive Reader, who duly considers the Occasion of this *Parable*, viz. The Discourse, begun by our Saviour, in the preceeding Chapter, of his Second coming to *Judgment*, and continued down through this : followed here *first* with the Parable of the *Ten Virgins*, evidently referring to Christ's Coming to Judgment, at the End of the World, and principally design'd to awaken Christians to the greater Watchfulness from the Consideration of the Uncertainty of the Time. *ψ. 13. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the Day nor the Hour, wherein the Son of Man cometh.*----Next follows this Parable of the *Talents*, manifestly design'd (as has been observed) to hold forth wherein our *Readiness* for Christ's second Coming to *Judgment* will consist, viz. in our having sincerely improved the *Advantages*, with which we have been intrusted, and so having approv'd ourselves good and faithful Servants, in the Account of the New Covenant. And wherein this will consist, is further illustrated in a particular Instance, put for all the rest, viz. that of honouring the Lord with our Substance, in Acts of *Charity* to the Poor, done for Christ's Sake : contain'd in a Description of the Process of the *last Judgment*, continued to the End of the Chapter.----And hence,

2. By the *Reckoning*, here mentioned as *deferred for a long Time*, is plainly to be understood the *final Account*, which we must all in that Day render to God, of our respective Improvements. This is further evident from the Reward assign'd to the *Faithful*, and the Doom pass'd on the *Unfaithful*. To the one is said, *Enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord* : but of the other,----*Cast the unprofitable Servant into outer Darkness, there shall be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth*. Where our Saviour insensibly slides out of the *Parable*, into the *Thing* intended to be signified : and thereby gives us an infallible Key to the whole ; it being plain here, that these Expressions, *Outer Darkness*, where there is *Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth*, are, by a *Periphrasis*, used by our Saviour to signify the Miseries of the Damned in *Hell*.----Hence,

3. It follows, that by *him that bath*, is evidently meant one who shall then be found to have, in the Account of God, what the New

Covenant requires, what in the Eye of that Covenant will denominate him a *Good and Faithful Servant*, or one that has *done well*. This is plain, in Regard 'tis with an evident Reference to the making up of that final Account in the Day of *Judgment*, that he is here said to *have*.----And hence,

4. It is equally evident, that by the following Expression, *To him shall be given*, is meant the *final Reward* of Glory in the future World.----

Now if the *Reckoning* here mentioned, refers intirely to the final Account in the Day of *Judgment*; and if it be the Scope and Design of this *Parable*, to point out what that is, which will then stand us in Stead, in that Day of *Reckoning*, viz. *Well-doing*, in the Account of the *New-Covenant*; And if by *him that hath*, be meant one that hath already exemplified that *Well-doing*, and is thereupon adjudg'd unto *Glory*; How is it possible that the *seeking striving Sinner*, "not yet converted throughly from Sin to God," but "still under the Dominion and Guilt of Sin," should be "the *Man that hath*, in our Saviour's Sense," in this Parable?---What *hath* such a Man? *Hath* he that which would stand him in stead, were he *now* standing at the Bar of God? *Hath* he what the *New Covenant* demands? *Hath* he what, in the Eye of that Covenant, will denominate him a *good and faithful Servant*, one that *has done well*, and stands intitled to eternal *Glory*? Can this possibly be true of one, who (according to your own Concession) is "under the Dominion and Guilt of Sin," and consequently an Unbeliever and an Impenitent in the Gospel-Sense, unreconciled to God, and in a State of Enmity and Rebellion against God, and under a righteous Sentence of Condemnation? Nay, is not *the Man that hath, to whom shall be given*, in this *Parable* of the Talents, evidently represented by our Saviour as one who has pass'd the awful *Trial* of the Great Day, and is publicly approved, and welcomed to *Glory*? *Well done, thou good and faithful Servant*,---enter into the Joy of thy Lord. And does the *seeking, striving Sinner*, which you describe, answer the Character of *this Man*? *Hath* he pass'd his last Trial? Is he openly approv'd of his Lord, and welcomed to the State of the Blessed? How therefore you could, so confidently as you do, affirm *him* to be *this Man*, in our Saviour's Sense, I must leave.

If you should excuse your Mistake, by alledging the Judgment of some *great and learned Men*, that have construed this Parable in Favour of the Opinion you here advance; I answer, *Every Error*, advanced in the Christian World, has its Pretence of being grounded on some Text of *Scripture*. Nor is this at all to be wonder'd at: for when

when once Persons have fallen into any erroneous Opinion, the Fruit of their own Imagination, and what appears to them reasonable, in their own very partial View of Things, they will easily fancy such Opinion supported by this or that Text of sacred *Scripture*; it may be, by a great Variety: And sometimes (because it is impossible, in that Case, to fix upon any Text, that is full and clear to their Purpose) they pretend, that the *Current of the whole Scripture* runs that Way, from the Beginning of *Genesis* to the End of *Revelation*. Nevertheless, certainly this is not to come to the Scriptures as a pure Fountain, to derive our Opinions from thence; but to bring our Opinions with us to the Scripture, and by the Help of a strong Imagination, to mould the Bible by them. Now,

This I take to be evidently the Case of those who urge a Promise to the *Unregenerate*, from this *Parable*. They first, it seems, conclude from their own View of Things, that such a *Promise* to the Sinner is highly *reasonable*, as may secure it in *his own Power* (at least *morally*) to be everlastingly happy: Which Conclusion being grounded partly on a *favourable* Thought of the State of the fallen Creature, especially on the State of an *awakened reforming* Sinner, as described above, they seem to conceive some *fitness* in such a State of the Sinner, *qualifying him for Help from God*, and constituting him a proper Subject of *gracious Promises*. This seems to be intimated in your Notion of there being a certain “*Medium* between an *obstinate relentless Sinner*, and one that is *thoroughly regenerate*, or intirely devoted to God,” and seems to be the Ground of your insisting that the Sinner be brought to “*strive in earnest*, that he may be *qualified for God's Help*.”—And now being fix'd in this Opinion, that there is a *Meetness* in this State of a Sinner to receive *Help* (i. e. *efficacious Aid*, or special Grace) *from God*, these Gentlemen bringing this Opinion with them to the sacred Text, they read here that *To every one that hath, shall be given*, and thence conclude a *Promise* from God made to the *striving Sinner*, though not yet thorowly devoted to God in Jesus Christ.

But, good Sir, by whose Authority do they make this Conclusion? Does it flow from divine Promises? Christ indeed in the *Parable* hath said, *Unto him that hath, shall be given*: But hath he any where said, that the *striving* (but unconverted) Sinner is this Man *that hath*? Or, Is there in all this *Parable* one Word, or Syllable, about the *striving Sinner*, or of the Bestowment of *converting Grace*? Surely, nothing like it. No, This is the preconceiv'd *human Opinion* (I spake of) which every one brings with him to the *divine Text*, who infers a *Promise* to Sinners from this *Parable*. And it is impossible

to argue any Thing, for their Opinion, conclusively from the *Parable* it self.

You go on to say, "*And I am under an invincible Necessity of understanding* MATTH. 7. 7. and II. 28. LUKE II. 13. &c. *as belonging to such as he.*" These Promises, you hold, do belong to the *Unregenerate*, though under the Dominion and Guilt of Sin, yet *seeking*, and *striving*, as aforesaid. But how do you prove this? Why first by the *Necessity* you find your self under thus to understand them: You plead, that you are *neecessitated* so to understand them, and that you *cannot for your Life help* thus interpreting them, &c. As if you meant to carry the Argument intirely by Dint of this Plea from a felt *Necessity* upon you.---But since it is allowed, on all Hands, that wrong Conceptions through Prejudice, or Want of a clear Understanding of the Case, may be the Ground of such an apprehended *Necessity*, as well as the Evidence of Truth, you will doubtless allow this Consideration to be absolutely set aside, in the present Debate, as containing nothing conclusive or argumentative in the Case before us.

You proceed, and say,----"*Can any one be so absurd as to interpret these Promises thus? You that have already received the special Grace of God, Ask, and ye shall receive:--- You that have already found Mercy, Seek, and ye shall find:--- You to whom the Gate of Mercy is already opened, and are already got within it, Knock, and it shall be opened:--- You who have already got Rest, Come to me, and I will give you Rest, &c.--- Is not this (say you) making perfect Nonsense of the precious Promises of God! To me it seems nothing can be more so. And yet this must be your own Interpretation (say you to the Rev. Author) if you deny their being made, even to the Unregenerate: i. e. to such of them as have been described.*"

The Argument used here is what is called *Reductio ad Absurdum*: And its whole Force lies in this, That these *Promises* cannot be otherwise interpreted, than as belonging to the *Unregenerate*, while such, but by resolving their Meaning into *perfect Nonsense*. Now, if this can be proved, I own, the Argument must be yielded: For, to be sure, we must not *make perfect Nonsense* of the holy Scriptures. --- But where is the Proof? You, Sir, indeed have said it; and that's all!---To refute this your Notion of the *Absurdity* of understanding these *Promises* otherwise, than as belonging to the *Unregenerate*, whilst such, it may suffice to observe, that it is intirely grounded on one or other, or all of the following *false Hypotheses*: viz.

1. That these conditional Promises were not spoken, or meant, to *Believers*, but to others *exclusive* of them.

2. That

2. That the *Matter of Petition and Inquiry* here, or what is here enjoined to be *asked and sought*, is limited to the first Grace of saving *Conversion*, and extends not to After-Grace, in *progressive Sanctification*.

3. That the *asking, seeking, knocking, and coming* to Christ, unto which the *Promise* is here annexed, are to be conceived as Doings that are *short* of that *Faith*, which implies a thorow Conversion to God in Christ.

These, I think, must be the Suppositions, on which your Notion of the *Absurdity* of our Interpretation is intirely grounded : Which being fairly examined, and removed by the Force of Truth, these *Promises* may be interpreted as we understand them, without any the least Shadow of *Absurdity*, and be sure, without any Danger of their being made *perfect Nonsense*. And now,

1. That *these Things are here supposed*, and made the intire Ground of that *Absurdity*, pretended to be in understanding those *Promises* otherwise than as belonging to the *Unregenerate*, whilst such, is evident from this Consideration, That the *removing* of these *Suppositions* is the removing of all Appearances of *Absurdity*, and leaves not any the least Shadow of it in the Case. For if these *Promises* are spoken and meant to *Believers*, and the Matter of the *Petition* here enjoined, is not limited to the first Grace of Conversion, *exclusive* of After-Grace in Order to *progressive Sanctification*, where is the *Absurdity* you speak of, even according to your own Reading of the Text? “*You that have already received the special Grace of God, that are true Believers, Heirs of the Promises, that have Grace and Glory and every good Thing laid up in them, Ask, and ye shall receive ;--- you who have already found Mercy, Seek and ye shall find, i. e. further Mercy, or more Grace.* Is it *absurd*, that he which hath *Life*, should have it *more abundantly* ? Is it at all *absurd*, that the Believer, who has received the *first Grace*, should be enjoined to *ask, seek, and knock* at the Door of Mercy, for further Supplies ? Or, is it *absurd*, that he should be promised *Success* in so doing ? So, if the *Asking*, to which the *Promise* is here annexed, be asking in *Faith*, where is the *Absurdity* of understanding these *Promises otherwise* than as belonging to the *Unregenerate*, continuing such ? Nay, how is it possible that they should belong to them at all, while continuing in their *Unbelief*, and not *through Christ having Access by the Spirit unto the Father* ?--- Thus it is fully evident, here, that the whole Pretence of *Absurdity*, in understanding these *Promises otherwise* than as belonging to the *Unregenerate*, depends intirely on the Truth of this, and the other Suppositions : Which if found *not true*, the Objection you make

make, vanishes intirely. So that what remains for me to do here, is,

2. To evince the utter *Falseness* of each of these *Suppositions*.----
And,

1. The Supposition, that these Promises were not spoken and meant to *Believers*, but to others *exclusive* of them, is evidently a *Mistake*. For it is certain, that Christ's *Disciples* were present at the preaching of this Sermon on the Mount, *Chap. 5. 1.* And likewise that what is said by our Saviour in *Luk. 11. 13.* was said directly to his *Disciples*, on their Request that he *would teach them to pray, v. 1.* Certain it is therefore, that these Promises were spoken and meant to *Believers*, and not to others *exclusive* of them; unless it be supposed here, that Christ's *Disciples* were not *Believers*; what no one, I presume, will pretend. Nay, which is more, to make good this Supposition, it must be proved, that there was not one of the whole Company present a *Believer*.

2. The Supposition, that the *Matter* of the *Petition* and *Inquiry* here, or what is here enjoined to be *asked* and *sought*, is limited to the first Grace of *Conversion*, exclusive of consequent Grace in *progressive* Sanctification, is also evidently *false*. For since these Duties were enjoined upon the *Disciples* themselves, with Promises of Success, and not on others *exclusive* of them, it must therefore be impossible, that the Matter of *Petition* and *Inquiry* enjoined them should be limited to the *first* Grace, because this they had *already* received; and therefore to enjoin them to ask and seek *that*, would be an Inconsistency and Absurdity indeed.---The Supposition,

3. That the *asking*, *seeking*, &c. to which Success is here *promised*, are Doings short of that *Faith*, which implies an intire Devotedness to God in Christ, is also evidently *false*. For, if the *asking* and *seeking*, &c. to which the *Promise* here is annex'd, be any Doings *short of unfeigned Faith*, then we are to understand our Saviour here to *enjoin* these Duties without regarding their necessary Principle, which is *Faith*. The Injunction ought in Reason to be interpreted in the same Latitude as the Promise that is annexed. And can it once be imagined, that our blessed Saviour would enjoin his *Disciples* to *ask*, *seek*, and *knock* by Prayer, without *Faith unfeigned*? Would not this be to teach them to approach unto God otherwise than through a *Mediator*; contrary to the grand Design of the *Gospel*? Which is stiled *Rom. 16. 26. The Revelation of the Mystery made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith.* Would it not be to enjoin what could by no Means be pleasing or acceptable to God? Since (*Heb. 11. 6.*) *Without Faith it is impossible to please God.* Do not the Scriptures enjoin

enjoin us (Col. 3. 17) *to do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ?* And can this be done without *Faith*? Yea, do not the Scriptures require the Exercise of *Faith*, in every Instance, to accompany Prayer? Seeing they declare it the Will of God (1 Tim. 2. 8.) *That Men pray every where, lifting up holy Hands, without Wrath and Doubting.* And can Prayer be performed with *holy Hands lifted up*, where that *Faith* is wanting, which *purifieth the Heart and Hands*? But certainly, it cannot be done *without Doubting*. Does not the Apostle James expressly caution all against this Mistake, of placing Dependence on the Success of Prayer destitute of *Faith*? Jam. 1. 5, 6, 7. *If any Man lack Wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all Men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth, is like a Wave of the Sea, driven with the Wind, and tossed. For let not that Man think that he shall receive any Thing of the Lord.* q. d. Taking into Consideration the Extent of the New-Covenant, the whole Design of God's Mercy to fallen Mankind through a *Mediator*, and the unbounded Goodness of God's Nature, whereby, in this New-Covenant-Way, he deals out to all Men most liberally, without upbraiding any; yet nevertheless, upon the largest View of these Things, let no Man fall into this Mistake, that a *faithless Prayer* will take hold of God, or obtain any Mercy at all, at his Hand.---From all which, and much more that might be offered, were it needful, it is incontestibly evident, that the last of these Suppositions, as well as the two former, is intirely a Mistake.

Nor is it less evident, that the *Coming to Christ*, to which a Promise of Rest stands annexed (Matth. 11. 28.) is plainly meant of coming by *Faith*; and it were easy to shew, it is generally so understood by Divines, of every Denomination. But if an Appeal be had here from the Authority of Men to the Authority of God, and according to that most excellent Rule of interpreting Scripture by Scripture, you are disposed to rest satisfied in a Decision of this Matter, by our Lord Jesus Christ himself, we then have it in *John* 6. 35. *I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh to me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me, shall never thirst.* Where it is exceeding obvious, that *coming to Christ*, as the *Bread of Life*, and *believing on him*, are used as Terms of the same Import, and equal Significancy: the same spiritual and everlastingly satisfying Blessings being *promised* to each.

Now, upon the whole, If it be certain, that the *Intire Reason* you have assign'd, why these Promises should be understood, as belonging to the *Unregenerate*, whilst such, is the *Absurdity* of understanding them *otherwise*; which indeed you say, cannot be done without mak-

making *perfect Nonsense* of them ;---and if it be also certain, that this Notion of the *Absurdity* of understanding them otherwise, be grounded wholly on certain *Suppositions* ; Which *Suppositions*, no less certainly are meer *Mistakes*, and utterly ungrounded : Then it must, I think, undeniably follow, that the whole *Reason* you have assign'd why these *Promises* should be understood as belonging to the Unregenerate, whilst such, is intirely *removed* and *vacated*.

Having thus rescued these *Texts* from that unnatural Force put upon them, by means of *false Suppositions*, and restored their *true* and *genuine* Meaning ; all that are honestly minded, and have no *preconceiv'd Scheme* of their own to serve by *wresting the Scriptures*, will (I doubt not) be able to read these *Promises* as made immediately to the *Children of God*, to excite them to be much and earnest in the great Duty of *Prayer*, from the Consideration of the Certainty of *Success* to attend the *Prayer of Faith* ; the *effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man availing much*. Though they are improvable also as an Excitement and Encouragement to all *others*, to be concern'd that they may be brought likewise to *ask, seek, knock, and come by Faith* to the Mercy of God through the *Mediator*, as the only certain Means of *Success*, taught us in the *Scriptures* of Truth, by *Divine Promises* made thereto.

Having, as you supposed, established the Sense of these *Texts* in your own Favour ; you, in the next Place, thus proceed. “ *For God's sake, Dear Sir, let us take Care that we do not, from a violent Attachment to any preconceived humane Schemes, pervert the plainest and most obvious Declarations, and Promises of the Gospel. To me it is manifest, that this is what those on your Side really do ; and that your whole System, where it is peculiar, is not founded on the holy Scriptures (taken in the whole, and critically read and considered) but on the empty Cob-webs of Scholastical Metaphysics (vain Philosophy, Science falsely so called) together with some few obscure Texts, not rightly understood, for want of a critical Skill in the ancient Languages, and the Notions and Controversies of those Times, and for want of an exact Attention to the Scope and Argument of the sacred Writers ; In Consequence of which you manifestly torture the plainest Texts, to make them speak your Sense, and so corrupt the Plainness and Simplicity of the Gospel, and in Effect make it a meer unintelligible Riddle.*”

Here, Sir, being struck with the utmost Surprise, I must beg leave to *pause* a while, as not able suddenly to resolve what is best to say !---- Is this the *Charity* !----This the following after *Peace* and *Holiness* !---- which you seem so earnestly to pray for, in your next Page.----Is this the melting of your *Bowels*, for them, over whom

(Page

(Pag. 22.) you profess to grieve, and for whom (Pag. 1) you express your *Charity*, as *Serious Christians*, that are not at all sensible of their Mistake ! Was it possible, Sir, that you should conceive any the least Tendency, in these astonishing Lines of yours, to win upon their Affections, or to set before them any Matter of Conviction ;--- unless it were of the present Temper of their *quandam* Friend towards them ?

Could you once imagine, Sir, that the Loudness of your Cry against others, as being *violently attached to human Schemes, perverting the plainest Texts, building on empty Cobwebs &c.* would secure you from the same Imputations ; or prevent your being, in the Sequel, found in the Number of those, against whom you make such a hideous Outcry ? The dark Character, you have here drawn, may perhaps in the Substance of it really agree to one or other of these contending Parties : But then what Right have you, good Sir, to sit *Judge*, in your own Cause ? Which, to make sure Work, you have done : and no wonder at all, that you have carried the Case in your own Favour.---However, the Right of Appeal is challenged ; and the Matter cheerfully submitted to the Judgment of impartial Readers, whether you have gained your Point, or not : *i. e.* Whether the Scriptures you have alledged, with your Reasons enforcing them, compared with what has now been replied, do clearly and fully prove the *Affirmative* Part of the Question before us ; I say, *clearly and fully*,---for such ought to be the Proof in this *important* Case ; since the Opinion you've advanced, affects the very Constitution of the *New-Covenant*, and adds to it an *essential Branch*, that we know nothing of.

The Covenant of Grace we acknowledge ; the Tenor whereof is plainly this, *He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting Life, and shall never perish.* According to this, God is a Covenant-God and Father to *Believers*. But a *Covenant-Obligation*, whereby God is bound to give his *special efficacious Grace*, and so his *Spirit*, and his *Christ*, to the *Unregenerate*, by Virtue of his own *Promise*, made to any *Doings, Seekings, Strivings* of theirs, short of that *Faith*, by which the *Just* do live, is what we don't know any Thing of, neither do the *Scriptures of Truth*, nor indeed any publick *Confession of Faith* in the Protestant World, that we are acquainted with, nor even the *Articles* and Homilies of your own Church of *England*. And therefore until this Point, which you so contend for, be settled, by clear and full Evidence from *Divine Testimony*, we must not, we dare not, admit of it, lest we be found guilty of *adding to the Word of God*.

But what is most of all surprizing here, is, that you should not only

so peremptorily decide the Case in your own Favour, but that you should in so confident a Manner accuse and condemn all on the other Side, as “ *perverting the plainest Declarations of the Gospel,--- founding their whole System, so far as it is peculiar (which at least must in your Sense, take in this of denying Promises of special Grace to any Doings of the Unregenerate) on the empty Cobwebs of scholastical Metaphysics, vain Philosophy, Science falsely so called,---Scripture not rightly understood, for Want of critical Skill in the antient Languages, and exact Attention to the Scope and Argument of the sacred Writers ; in Consequence of which (say you to the Rev. Author and those of his Mind) you manifestly torture the plainest Texts to make them speak your Sense, and corrupt the Simplicity of the Gospel, and make it in Effect a meer unintelligible Riddle.*”

Now, Sir, I pray tell me, was this truly the Case with all those famous Bishops, Doctors, and Clergy of the Church of England, who have given their Suffrages full in Favour of the Negative Side of the Question ? Or was this indeed the Case with the whole Body of the Clergy of the Church of Scotland, from the first Dawn of the Reformation ? And was this the Case with all those other eminent Divines at home and abroad, living and dead, that might be mentioned, as favouring the Negative in the present Question ? In sober Earnest, tell me, Sir, Do all these *pervert the most obvious Promises of the Gospel, from a violent Attachment to human Schemes ? Do all these godly, learned Men torture the plainest Texts, to make them speak their Sense ? Do they all, in this Point at least, build upon the empty Cobwebs of Scholastick Metaphysics, and vain Philosophy ? Have none of them ever been Masters of a sufficient critical Skill in the ancient Languages ? &c. &c.*

I might here confront your Opinion with the contrary Judgment of many of the greatest Writers in your own Church : from whom I might easily collect enough to fill up a considerable Volume. But I shall at present give you only a Quotation from that renowned Prelate, pious and learned Bishop Hopkins, on the Covenant (P. 152) where having said several Things on this Head, he sums up the Matter thus. “ In brief, “ the *absolute* Covenant promiseth the first Grace of Conversion to God ; “ the *Conditional* promiseth *Life, if we be converted.* The *Conditional* “ promiseth *Life, if we believe :* The *Absolute* promiseth *Faith,* “ whereby we may believe to the saving of our Souls ; and there- “ fore it is called an *absolute* Covenant, because the *first Grace* of Con- “ version to God *cannot be given upon Conditions.*----It is indeed com- “ monly wrought in Men by the right Use of *Means*, as hearing “ the Word, Meditation, Prayer, &c. but these Means are not *Con-*
ditions

“ditions of Grace, because we have found that in some Instances
 “God hath not limited himself to them.---- And indeed, what is
 “there that can in Reason be supposed a *Condition* of God’s bestow-
 “ing the Gift of the *first Grace* upon us? Either it must be some
 “Act of *Grace*, or of meer *Nature*. Not of *Grace*, for then the *first*
 “Grace would be *already* given: Nor of *Nature*, for then *Grace*
 “would be given according to *Works*, which is the *Sum* and *Upshot*
 “of PELAGIANISM.”

Now, Sir, for my own Part, though I am far from concluding, that every one, who is in this Error, is a *Pelagian*: Because this may be the Case with some, who have, ere they were aware, been induced, by what they have heard plausibly said on this Point, to entertain a favourable Thought of it: Yet I am fully persuaded, that this learned Bishop *thoroughly understood what he here says*, and that when ever Truth in this Point is searched to the Bottom, the *Affirmative* Part of the Question will be found the pernicious Fruit of Error, growing on the *Pelagian* Root of denying the Doctrine of *Original Sin*, as held forth in our publick *Confessions* of Faith, and in the *Articles* and *Homilies* of the Church of *England*:---And that, reserving Credit to the Doctrine of *Original Sin*, it will be found a much harder Task to *reconcile* with the *Divine Attributes* this unaccountable Notion of a *Grant* in the Gospel, of *New Covenant-Blessings*, on Condition of *Old Covenant-Works*, i. e. certain Doings of the *Unregenerate*, whilst such, than to reconcile with the *Divine Attributes*, the Notion of God’s permitting fallen Mankind to come into the World in such a corrupt and sinful State, as not to have it secured in all Respects in their *Power* (as well *Morally*, i. e. notwithstanding any inherent Viciousness or Depravity, as *naturally*) to be everlastingly happy. And here, Sir, by the Way, since you have been ready to impute it to *Prejudice*, when any among your *Dissenting Brethren* (as you call them) have doubted of your *Orthodoxy* in the grand Point of *Original Sin*, I would observe that you have now (on what is recited above) an advantage of considering the Matter more free from *Prejudice*; since it is not the doubtful Tho’t, but firm persuasion of one of your own *Bishops*, that the *Error*, which you plead for is the very *Sum* and *Upshot* of *Pelagianism*.

What now remains of your Letter, is chiefly a repeating and urging of that *invincible Necessity*, which you say you are under, of understanding these Promises as belonging to the *unregenerate*, i. e. whilst such. “I cannot for my Life (say you) help interpreting these, and the like Promises in this plain, easy and obvious Manner: You that have not yet received the Grace of God, for the thorow Renovation of your
 Souls,

Souls, *Ask and ye shall receive.*" Again you say,---*Thus I am necessitated*,---and---*Thus I am obliged*---" Which concludes the Argumentative Part of your *Letter*, Pag. 26, 27.

Here I shall only appeal to the impartial Reader, Whether it be not abundantly evident, from what has been argued and remark'd above, that no such *invincible Necessity*, or *Obligation*, as you plead, ariseth from any thing either expressed or implied in those sacred *Texts*. To me it is evident, that whenever this Matter is thoroughly examin'd, it will be found, that the *Neceffitation* or *Obligation* upon you, results not in the least from the genuine Sense or true Force of these *Scriptures*, as unavoidably to be interpreted, as including this Point of Doctrine, which you plead to be held forth in them : but I doubt, you find and feel, in the present Debate, a pressing *Necessity* upon you, in Order to support your *Scheme*, a *Necessity* (I say) of alledging some plausible *Texts* from the Book of God, to countenance your Notion of God's being *obliged* to the Bestowment of *converting* Grace, by virtue of his own *Promise* made to the *Doings* of the *Unregenerate*, whilst continuing such.

There being an inseparable *Connection* between the Opinion of God's being obliged, by *Covenant*, as above, and what you seem to make a grand Foundation-Principle in your *Scheme*, (pag. 6.) "*That it is inconsistent with the Attributes of God to give Being to any of his Intelligent Creatures (the Corruption of the Fall notwithstanding) without putting them into a Condition, that (every Thing being considered, in the whole of their Nature and Duration) would render Being desirable to them;*" No Wonder then, that you are so earnestly intent upon finding out some *Texts* of *Scripture* interpretable in Favour of your Opinion about a *Promise* to the *Unregenerate*.

For if, as you say, it be thus *inconsistent with the Attributes of God*, to give Being to any of the Offspring of fallen *Adam*, without putting them into this *desirable* State of Being, above described, then it must be also *inconsistent with God's Attributes*, to give them any *Being* at all, without securing it in their *Power*, in all Respects (as well *Morally*, as *Naturally*) to be, in some Degree at least, *finally happy* : unless you should suppose, that that State of Being is *desirable*, that is destitute of sufficient *Power* to be in any Degree *finally happy*; which doubtless you will be far from allowing.--- And since you readily acknowledge (pag. 24.) that "*the Sinner cannot, of himself, [even under all the external Advantages of the Gospel] truly repent and turn to God, without his Help; i. e. Divine efficacious Aid, or special Grace; and so consequently without this, has not sufficient Power to be in any Degree finally happy* : Is it not a clear Case, that unless you can

weld this Link of your Theological Chain, and fasten it into the other, by proving from the Word of God, that *He* has actually *promised Special Grace*, or (as you call it) *Efficacious Aid*, to the *Unregenerate*, on Condition of some Doings of theirs, *whilst such*, your Chain must fail you, and so your *Superstructure* and *Foundation* must necessarily sink together !

Hence, No Wonder, you have bestir'd your self so vigorously, in *such a Season*, when the Power of *Sovereign Grace* hath been display'd, in a Manner that is truly admirable, for Conviction, unto great Numbers in one Place and another, of this great Gospel-Truth, by happy Experience of a Work of Grace (hopefully) wrought in their Hearts ; and especially since, by long Observation and Experience it is found, that according as the *Work of God's Grace* in the saving Conversion of Sinners *sensibly goes on* among a People, this *Error*, or mistaken Opinion of God's being by Covenant *obliged* to dispense his special renewing Grace, on the Doings of *Unregenerate Sinners*, whilst such, *sensibly goes down* among them.---So that the *Scheme* you defend, has not only been in imminent Danger, in the late remarkable Season of Grace ; but has really fallen in the Hearts of very many, who, being (hopefully) *turned from Darkness to Light*, and *from the Power of Satan unto God*, have of their own Accord confessed their full *Conviction* in this Point, and frequently bemoaned their past *Ignorance* in such Language as this,---*Once we thought, God bestowed renewing Grace on Sinners, as having promised it to their Endeavours ; but now we know, it is otherwise, and are convinc'd by our own Experience, agreeable to the Scriptures, that when ever God converts and saves any, it is meerly, because so it seemeth good in his Sight ! O (say they) how spiritually blind we were ! for alas, what can there be in the Doings of a wretched, sinful, all over polluted, guilty Creature, out of Christ, that an infinitely holy God should oblige himself to !*---It was therefore, Sir, but reasonable to expect (considering the View which you have of Things) that you should on this Occasion *bring forth your strong Reasons* ; and produce the whole Strength of Argument, that could be gathered, from all that hath been said on your Side of the Question, or that the Case would possibly admit in Defence of this Principle of yours. Accordingly it is observable, that the Run of your Letter is correspondent with what others have said before you : and the *Scriptures* you quote, the same that have chiefly been insisted on by them ; though to me indeed in the same *groundless* Manner, and very far short of bringing out a Conclusion in *your Favour*. But relying on the Reasons already assigned, which I submit to the Impartial, I will dismiss the present Head, when I have only made one further Remark.---

How

How it is possible, that any Reasonable Creature should, upon a due and deliberate Meditation on those *Scriptures*, be able (from the pure Force of what is therein express'd or imply'd) to appeal to Omniscience, and say, LORD, according to my best Understanding, I here clearly read thy gracious *Promise*, of the Bestowment of *effectual converting Grace*, made to certain Doings of the *Unregenerate* whilst such! --- This, I must confess, is quite beyond all the Power of Discerning I am conscious of in my self.

Thus I have done with the third Thing propos'd, and now proceed to the next and last.

IV. To suggest and urge some *Considerations* in *Favour* of the *Negative* Side of the Question before us ; which will lead me to illustrate and confirm the main *Arguments* advanc'd by Mr. Cooke in his Sermon.

Though the *Negative* necessarily stands Good, 'till the *Affirmative* be proved ; and (if true) needs no other *Vindication*, than this, viz. *It does not appear*, or 'tis not evident, from *Divine Revelation*, that God, is by Covenant *obliged*, as you hold : Yet, since it mayn't be without its Use, I shall touch on some of the many *Considerations*, that offer themselves in *Confirmation* of the contrary, held by us. ----- And here,

It appears to me reasonable, and just, to allow the first Place to the Rev. Mr. Cooke's Arguments (which you have not formally considered) as they lie in his *Sermon* ; where, under the Application, having first infer'd, " That it is a *great Mistake*, and of *dangerous Consequence*, which many carnal Persons under the Gospel fall into, who will persuade themselves, that by their own *Doings* (though they cannot properly *merit*, yet) they are *insured* of spiritual and saving Mercies, by Virtue of *Promises*, which God hath made to them in his Word ?" This the Rev. *Author* proceeds to enforce and illustrate, by sundry Arguments. (Vid. *Serm.* Pag. 16, to 22.) He argues,

I. That this Mistake in the Sinner must be *dangerous*, as it contains nothing less in it, than his *sticking fast* to the *first Covenant*, the Covenant of *Works* : and that since, by that Covenant, Life was secured to Man's own *Doings*, not as strictly *meritorious*, but " meerly
 " by Virtue of God's *Covenant-Promise*, therefore for a poor Sinner
 " to persuade himself, upon what he has done, or can do, that he
 " hath a good *Claim* to converting and saving Mercies, by Virtue
 " of the *Promises*, is nothing more or less than to stand, to this Mo-
 " ment, on the Foot of a *Covenant of Works*, as really, in the Essen-
 " tials of it, as ever Man in the *Beginning* did : And the unhappy
 " Creature

“ Creature is all this while *going about to establish a Righteousness of his own*, for the general Kind the same with That, required in the *first Covenant*.” ----- The *Author* argues against that mistaken Persuasion,

2. That it leaves Room for *Boasting* : And this, he justly observes, “ is quite inconsistent with and contrary to the whole Tenor and main Design of the *Gospel*, which is perfectly to exclude all *Boasting* in and of *our selves*, and to lay the Crown of our Salvation on the Head of rich, free, and sovereign *Grace* through Christ Jesus.”

Omitting at present the three other subservient Considerations, mentioned by the *Author* in his Sermon, I shall confine my Thoughts to the two above-recited : And considering these in one complex View, as they are of such near Affinity, and so closely connected, I shall vindicate them both together, for Brevity's Sake.

Now, to open the Way to this Defence, allow me to make a few preliminary Observations. And I say in general, If it can be made evident, that to hold certain *Seekings*, *Strivings*, or *Doings* whatsoever of the *Unregenerate*, whilst such, *conditional* of the Bestowment of *special converting Grace*, or that to which the *Promise* of such Grace is made, be to countenance the fallen Creature's *going about to establish his own Righteousness*, and to allow of that *Boasting*, to which the Gospel every where expressly denies any Place in the Affair of *bringing us unto God* ; it will then doubtless be acknowledg'd, upon such Evidence, that the *Arguments* above are solid and conclusive.--- And the Truth of the foregoing Proposition, may, I think, be evinc'd by the following Considerations.

1. That to suppose *special converting Grace* ensured or secured to the *Unregenerate*, by a *Promise* thereof made to any *Doings* of theirs, whilst under the Dominion and Guilt of Sin, and establishing a *Connection* between such *his Grace*, and such *their Doings*, is to suppose God's acting properly as a *moral Governor* in this Affair, and making the Sinner's *Works* the Rule of his Dispensations, even in point of *Regenerating Grace*, or effectual Calling.---And again,

2. This supposes some acceptable Degree of *moral Goodness*, *intrinsic Worth*, or true *Excellency*, in these *Doings* of the *Unregenerate* ; something in them of vital and true *Holiness*, in God's Account : and implies that his Method of *saving us* is by *Works of Righteousness*, which we have done, and not merely according to his *Mercy*, or sovereign *Grace*.----Because, if there were not some acceptable Measure of *moral Rectitude* and true *Goodness*, or nothing that is truly *vital*, *spiritual* and *holy*, in such their *Doings*, it seems not reconcilable with the *moral Perfections* of God, and therefore impossible in the

the Nature of Things, that he should establish a *Rule*, respecting these *Doings* of theirs as the *Condition* of his Promise, according to which, as a moral Governor, he conducts himself in the Dispensation of his *first* special Grace to Sinners.----And now,

3. To assert, that there is any the least true *Vitality*, *Spirituality*, or moral *Rectitude* before God, in the best *Doings* of the *Unregenerate*, even of Sinners in your *middle* Condition, i. e. “Such as are really solicitous for Salvation, but not yet thoroughly converted from Sin to God,” and accordingly to confide in and plead any such *Doings* as *intitling* (though by virtue of the Promises only) to *special Grace*, ---this it self is that very *Boasting*, which by the whole Tenor of the Christian Revelation is *excluded* out of the Business of our *seeking to be justify'd by Christ*, and *coming to God by him* for Salvation.----And hence it inevitably follows,

4. That to teach for Doctrine, that any the best *Endeavours* and highest *Improvements* of Sinners *Unregenerate*, or in your Sense of the Word, such as are “*not yet intirely devoted to God*,” are the reveal'd federal *Condition* of promised converting *Grace*, is in true Construction nothing less than to *introduce* into the Scheme of Salvation that very *Boasting*, which the Gospel most expressly *shuts out*, and to patronise that *going about to establish our own Righteousness*, which is inconsistent with a due *Submission to the Righteousness that is of God by Faith*.----This Conclusion will necessarily arise out of the Premises; which, as I apprehend, admit of the easiest and most copious Proofs, from Revelation and Reason.

As to the Thing supposed in the *first* Proposition, it appears to me one of the leading Principles in the *Arminian* Scheme, and is agreeable (Sir) to your profess'd Opinion, That God dispenses his *special Grace*, or in your Sense of the Words, his *efficacious Aid*, not as an absolute Proprietor and sovereign Benefactor, but as a *moral Governor*, and *righteous Judge* of the Behaviour and Improvements of his Creatures.

And as to the *second* Proposition, this is strictly demonstrable from the first: since to suppose the Behaviour and Improvements of the Creature to be the *Rule*, which God respects, as a *moral Governor* and *righteous Judge*, in the Dispensation of his special efficacious Grace, and yet at the same time to suppose the said Behaviour and Improvements quite *devoid* of all true moral *Goodness* or vital *Holiness* in the sight of God, would be nothing less than to make two *incompatible* Suppositions, and to run yourself into a flat *Contradiction*.

So that the only Article in the Premises, that demands Proof, in
Order

Order to bring out the Conclusion, and establish the Argument in hand, is the *third*,---as above. And this again is too evident, to need any elaborate Confirmation of it. For the Sinner's conceiving so highly of his own *Doings*, or any possible *Strivings*, *Seekings*, or *Comings to Christ*, which he is capable of in his *unregenerate* Condition, and while (according to you) *not yet thoroughly converted*, as to imagine some true *Virtue*, some proper *Righteousness*, or moral *Rectitude* in such his Performances and Endeavours, and accordingly to imagine a *Right* to the Blessing of *special Grace*, or Divine efficacious Aid, *pass'd over to him* by Means of these his Doings and Attempts, though only as Compliances with the Divine conditional *Promise*, in which God is supposed to have made a sure *Connection* between renewing Grace and such Endeavours ; *This*, if I know any thing of Gospel-Humility, is not to *think soberly*, but to *think of himself more highly than he ought to think*, as the Case appears to me. Here is spiritual *Pride*, founded on vain Imaginations. Here are Falsehoods set up for Truths, and improv'd to *Self Righteousness*, and to such *Self-Boasting*, as hath much of moral Evil in it. And methinks, none should doubt whether the Gospel-Scheme of Salvation excludes *this*, when it is so expressly declared that *Boasting* (all sinful Boasting) *is excluded by the Law of Faith*.

The only Point here, requiring Proof, I think is this, That the *Supposition* of any true *moral Excellency* and *solid Goodness* in the best possible Doings of the *Unregenerate*, whilst such, is but a meer *Dream* and *vain Imagination*.

And though this appears to me incontestibly evident, both from Scripture and Reason, yet because I would not anticipate what will more properly be offer'd in another Place hereafter, I shall at present only suggest and argue a little with you upon the Impossibility, in the Nature of Things, that this *Supposition* should be *true*. For, since the sole original Standard, by which the moral Goodness or Rectitude of the Creatures Actions can be measur'd and determined, is the moral Perfections of God, and since *Sin* is the predominant Principle in the *unrenewed* Man, from whence all his Actions must take their principal Denomination and have their Specification, how is it possible for the best Doings of such a Man, while under the Dominion of *Sin*, to harmonise in any Degree with the moral Nature of God, so as to be approvable in his Sight ? It's impossible then, that the *Supposition* before us should have any Foundation in *Truth*.----And I argue upon this ; If the best Doings of the *Unregenerate* have no proper moral Goodness in them, they then have no moral *Fitness* to be the *Condition* in a Divine *Promise*

of special Grace ; and consequently to plead such a morally unfit Condition, though perform'd to the highest Degree that an unregenerate State will admit of, as intitling the Doer (in Virtue of a pretended Promise) to saving Grace, is to *rejoice in a Thing of Nought*, and to *bring in that vain Boasting*, which the Gospel-Scheme intirely *shuts out*. To suppose therefore any *Works* of the Unregenerate, in God's Promise, cloathed with such a *Conditionality*, as hath this *excluded Boasting* inseparably connected with it, is nothing less than to *pervert the Gospel of Christ*, and thwart its true Design, in this Particular.

It appears to me a clear Scripture-Truth, that with a View to the *Exclusion of Boasting*, all *Works* of the Unregenerate are, in the Scheme of the Gospel, excluded from being *conditional* of the Bestowment of *special Grace*.----And this Truth, I think, is demonstrable from many plain Texts in sacred Writ. To instance in a few. We read, Tit. 3. 5. *Not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done, but according to his Mercy, he saved us.* 2. Tim. i. 9. *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling, not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace*.----The Apostle speaks not of a meer *Salvability*, but of *actual Salvation*; asserts a then-existing State ; and points out the Method of Introduction into it, both negatively and positively.----*Hath saved us.* i. e. not only given us the external Means of Salvation, and brought us into his visible Kingdom, but into a justify'd and renew'd State ; the Apostle speaking this knowingly for himself, and charitably for others : nor can any reasonable Doubt arise here of his using the Word [*saved*] in this Sense. And as to the Method of bringing them into this saved State, he peremptorily determines it to be, in its negative View, *not by Works of Righteousness which they had done ; not according to Works*, any at all whatsoever, previous to and conditional of the Bestowment of saving Grace. He does not merely say, *not for Works*, but *not by* or *through* them, yea, even *not according to them*, i. e. not with any Reference to them, as a Condition. But, in a positive View of the Case, 'twas intirely *according to God's Mercy, according to his own Purpose and Grace*. His own *Mercy* was all his Motive to *saving* them : and his own *Purpose* his only Rule in Dispensing his Grace.----Again, we read, 1 Cor. 4. 7. *Who maketh thee to differ from another ? and what hast thou, that thou didst not receive ? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory [or boast] as though thou hadst not received it ?*----So Rom. 4. 2, &c. *If Abraham were justified by Works, he hath whereof to glory ; but not before God*.---*To him that worketh, is the Reward not reckoned of Grace, but of Debt*.----*To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him who justifieth*
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the Ungodly, his Faith is counted for Righteousness.---Unto them God imputeth Righteousness without Works.---Again, Rom. 3. 27. *Where is Boasting then ? It is excluded. By what Law ? Of works ! Nay, but by the Law of Faith.* And Chap. 11. 6. *If by Grace, then it is no more of Works : otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it be of Works, then is it no more Grace : otherwise Work is no more Work.* Again, Eph. 2. 9. *Not of Works, lest any Man should boast.*---And once more 1 Cor. 1. 29. *That no Flesh should glory in his Presence.*

It appears to me exceeding evident from these and other parallel Texts, that with a View to the Exclusion of all Glorifying or Boasting in and of ourselves, the Works of the Unregenerate must be understood, as consider'd under some certain *Notion, Relation, or Quality*, to be excluded from the Business of their Recovery out of a perishing State of Nature into a State of Salvation, i. e. a justify'd and sanctify'd State. For, Boasting is said to be excluded, *Not by the Law of Works, but by the Law of Faith.* However, *do we make void the Law through Faith ? God forbid ! Yea, we establish the Law.* Certainly therefore Works are not excluded as to their general Being, or in Respect of our moral Obligation to them ; but the Law strictly requires them of every Man. And hence it is a clear Consequence, that since the Law is not made void through Faith, therefore the Exclusion of Works by the Gospel must be taken in some qualified and limited Sense, and must respect these Works as consider'd under some certain special *Notion, Relation, or imagin'd Quality.*---And what can these be ? I answer, They are all possible mistaken Notions, Relations or supposed Qualities, under which those Works being considered, they do contain Grounds of Boasting. This is evident from the Scripture's saying, *Not of Works, lest any Man should boast* : which shews, that were it of Works, it would threaten this Consequence, and therefore that the View in excluding Works is for the sake of excluding Boasting. But more particularly, the Works of the Unregenerate are excluded with this View, when consider'd under the Notion (1.) Of their containing in them a proper *Efficiency* or *Power* to renew and purify their Hearts, cure their moral Disorders, and recover them to Happiness, in Concurrence with the external Advantages of the Gospel.---Or (2.) Of their carrying strict and proper *Merit* in them, to intitle them to Divine special Grace.---Or (3.) Of their having in them something of *Moral Goodness* or true *Rectitude* in God's Account, to recommend them to his Acceptance, and us to his Favour.---Or (4.) Of their being an appointed *Condition* in the Gospel-Covenant, and having the *Promise* of special Grace made to them.---These are some of the mistaken Notions or Respects, under which the unregenerate

nerate striving Sinner may be apt to conceive too highly of his Works: and we may justly suppose, his best *Works* are, under all such Considerations of them, *excluded* by the Law of Faith, for the Sake of excluding *Boasting*. These imply so many vain Efforts of the fallen Creature in *going about to establish his own Righteousness*, and to restore himself to Happiness, by Virtue of his own Sufficiency, without *submitting himself to the Righteousness of God*, or being dependant on his sovereign Grace for Salvation.

Now, though it were no difficult Task, to prove, that *Works*, as consider'd under all the above-mentioned Respects, are by the Gospel-Scheme of Salvation *excluded*, for the sake of excluding *Boasting*; yet because 'tis the *last* only I am here concerned with, I shall wholly pass the others; save only so far as either of them may serve for a Medium, applicable to my purpose, in the present Debate.---Two Things are proper to be attempted, for clearing the Point now before us.

(1.) That the Works of the Unregenerate are in the Scheme of Man's Salvation *excluded*, for the sake of excluding *Boasting*.---And (2.) Their being excluded with this View, argues that they must of Necessity be denied the Place of *Conditions* in any Divine Promise of special Grace.

[1.] I am to shew, that the *Works of the Unregenerate, while such, even all their best Duties, Endeavours, and Improvements whatever, supposed by themselves or others to have some true Goodness and moral Excellency, whereby they might be acceptable to God, are, as considered under that Notion, excluded from the Business of a Sinner's being brought into a saved State, for the sake of excluding Boasting.*

The Truth of this may be evinc'd from sundry Considerations, As,

1. From Scripture-Representations of the End design'd in the Exclusion of *Works*, viz. that *Boasting* may be *excluded*.---By the Texts before cited, it appears, that *Works* are *excluded* for the sake of excluding *Boasting*: and if so, it must be concluded, the Design is to exclude them under *every Notion*, which contains the Grounds, of or leaves Room for *Boasting*. By Consequence, it must be the Intention of the Holy Ghost to exclude them under the Notion of their being *morally good*, in the sight of God; since *Works*, consider'd in this View, do contain evident Grounds of *Boasting*, or at least evidently leave Room for it; Moral Rectitude being the very Image of God, which was the primitive Glory of Man, and the highest Excellency that can be attributed to any Doings of the Creature.---It were absurd, to assert that the Scripture should exclude *Works* for the sake of excluding *Boasting*, and yet at the same time to suppose
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it allows them to have any true *Moral Goodness* in them ; since in this Case the design would be frustrated, and *Boasting* would by no means be excluded, though *Works* were under every other Notion, but this, excluded. Accordingly we find, that the Holy Ghost, by the Pen of the Apostle, in all that he says on this Subject in the places above cited, shews it plainly to be his Design and Drift, to exclude *Works*, as consider'd under this mistaken Notion of their having in them *Moral Goodness*, or true Holiness, in the sight of God. Thus when the Apostle uses such Expressions as these, *By Grace ye are saved,---not of Works ;---Not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, &c.* his Meaning can't be, to deny that he or others then in a renew'd State had before their Conversion done any *Works* whatsoever, that were *materially* good, such as praying, and the like commanded Duties ; but to disclaim the *formal Goodness* of them, and deny them to have *true Morality* in God's Account, or any such Conformity to his righteous Law, as makes them pleasing to Him ; which the Pride and Ignorance of the fallen Creature flatter him with vain Imaginations of.---All *Works* therefore of the Unregenerate, as consider'd under this Notion of being *morally good*, must by the Gospel be utterly *excluded*, in Order that hereby all Grounds of *Boasting* might be remov'd, and no Place left for it in the Scheme of Man's Salvation.---Let it be observ'd now,

* 2. That all *Works* of the *Unregenerate*, supposed to be of a true *moral* Complexion, as above described, are the very *Works*, which the Scripture clearly points out as design'd to be *excluded*, for the sake of excluding *Boasting*. Here it may suffice to cite two or three plain Texts. Thus, *Eph. 2. 5. Even when we were dead in Sins, he hath quickned us together with Christ. (By Grace ye are saved.)* The Sinner's being brought into a State of Salvation is here, in the strongest Language, intirely resolved into *Divine Grace* : and in like Language the same Apostle declares it to be *not of our selves,---not of Works*, ver. 8, 9. And agreeably in *Rom. 11. 6. Grace and Works* are opposed to each other, as incompatible in this Affair. Now that *Works* of the Unregenerate, pretended to be of a spiritual and moral Character, are comprehended here, and designedly by the Apostle excluded from the Business of their being brought into a *saved* State, appears evidently, by his fetching an Argument, for the Illustration of *Divine Grace*, from their *antecedent* State, which he describes as a State of spiritual or moral *Death* : and this carries in it the strongest Implication of their total Incapacity to do *Works* truly *moral* and *spiritual*. These *Works* then, to preserve the Force of the Apostle's Reasoning, we must understand to be here meant by him, when he tells

tells them, that their Salvation was not *of Works*.---And this Construction may be enforce'd, by considering the *End*, for which (as he observes) *Works* are excluded. *ψ. 9. Not of Works, lest any Man should Boast.* Upon which it immediately follows, *For we are God's Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works*.---Salvation cannot be *of Works*, any *good Works* whatsoever ; because none truly such in God's Account can possibly *precede* Salvation begun, in this being *created in Christ Jesus*.---Though in the first Passage the Apostle speaks of *Works* indefinitely, yet the *End* he assigns for their Exclusion, Discovers a particular Reference to such as are of a *laudable* Aspect, and supposed by the Doers of them to be *morally Good* in the Account of God. Else what Grounds of *Boasting* could be pretended?---However, to intimate the moral specifick Difference there is between the best Duties done *before* Conversion, and the same done *after*, he distinguishes the latter by a peculiar *Epithet*, and intitles them *Good Works*. And the Force of the Argument here, to confirm his Point, lies chiefly in this, That *good Works* (truly such) are *subsequent Fruits* of Salvation already begun in the Soul : and therefore they cannot either in the Nature of Things, by their own Efficiency, be the productive Cause of it ; nor yet in the Scheme of the Gospel, by Divine Appointment, be the *Covenant-Condition* of it ; nor by virtue of any relative or intrinsick Excellency in them, be the *moving* Consideration with God to bestow it ; because in either of these Views of them, an *Antecedency* is supposed, that is repugnant to the Scripture, which dates their Existence, not before, but *after* Conversion. *For we are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works.*

Now can there be any Shadow of a reasonable Ground to doubt, whether the Apostle, where he rejects the Notion of Salvation's being *of Works* (so far as it respects its Beginning at least) intends such *Works* of the Unregenerate, as they are apt fondly to imagine are of the same *moral Kind* and *excellent Quality* with those that Believers are said to be *created in Christ Jesus unto*, which the Apostle calls *good Works*, and which are so indeed, being in point of Principle and End and Manner, as well as Matter, truly (though imperfectly) conformable to the Nature and Will of God, the Rule and Pattern of moral *Goodness*.---Surely it were unworthy the Character of an inspir'd Apostle, to make him so weak and inconsistent a Reasoner, as to argue, that Salvation is *not of Works*, because otherwise *Boasting* were *not excluded* ; and yet all the while to have his Eye here, not to such *Works* as Men flatter themselves with the Supposition of a *moral Goodness* in, and which only can be imagin'd to carry in them
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any Grounds of *Boasting*, but to others of a quite different Kind, that can be supposed to afford no possible Pretext for this *Boasting*; for the sake of *excluding* which, the Apostle declares *Works* excluded! ---- We must therefore, were it only in Reverence to the inspir'd Writer, conclude, that when he shuts out *Works* from having a Hand in beginning the Salvation of a Sinner, he means to exclude *all Works* of the Unregenerate, whatever *Goodness* or moral Excellence they may conceive to be in them.

I would subjoin here: If I mistake not, there are these two or three Things will clearly follow from the Tenor and Scope of the Apostle's Argumentation.

(1.) That all *Boasting* on the Part of the Unregenerate, is so founded on that false Hypothesis of their Capacity to do (in their present State) *Works morally good*, holy or spiritual, in God's Account, as that the *excluding* of *Works*, under that Notion or Respect, will effectually exclude them under every Notion or Respect, that implies any the least Ground for *Boasting*; or, which amounts to the same Thing, will effectually exclude all *Boasting*, in that Case.---And this will appear, if we consider (1.) That it is manifestly the Apostle's Design here, so to exclude *Works*, as by that Means to exclude all *Boasting*. Says he, *Not of Works, lest any Man should Boast*: q. d. Not of *Works*, consider'd under any Notion whatever that contains in it Grounds of *Boasting*.---And (2) That with this View, he sets himself to prove, that *good Works*, truly such, are *consequential* to Regeneration, and so an *impossible* Supposition before it. Thus his Reasonings stand in Connection:---*Not of Works, lest any Man should Boast. For we are God's Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works.* This proves, that when he uses the exclusive Phrase, *Not of Works*, he must have his Eye to such *Works* only, as being supposed to have in them the true Excellency of *good Works*, do under that Notion contain Grounds of *Boasting*. And now to shew, that in the Gospel-Scheme of *Salvation* there's no Room left for any such *Boasting*, he destroys the very *Notion* on which this is founded, by assuring us that *Works truly good* do follow Conversion, or the new *Creation in Christ Jesus*, and therefore can never have Place in an *unregenerate* State. This View of his Reasoning makes it close, and effectual to cut off *Boasting*: but to take it in any other View, not consistent with this, will (for ought I can see) leave it loose, incoherent, and utterly inconclusive to his Purpose; which it were most unworthy and absurd to suppose in the Case of an Apostle, writing under divine Inspiration.----Besides, this Argument may be strengthen'd by considering (as before suggested) the *Nature of Things*. For, seeing mo-
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ral Goodness is the true Excellency of human Nature and human Actions, if *that* be deny'd in the Case of an Unregenerate Man, what Grounds are left such an one of *glorjyng* in himself, or *boasting* in any Efforts of his own towards Salvation? So that the Apostle here, methinks, appears as a Master-Workman indeed; at one Blow striking Death at the Root of all *Boasting*, in this Affair of *obtaining the Salvation which is by Christ Jesus*. For how is it possible, in the Nature of Things, that *Works* destitute of all true moral Excellency, should by any *Efficacy* of theirs be productive of saving Conversion, or ingenerate moral Goodness in Men! This were absurdly to suppose them, to *give* what they *have not*; yea, to produce an Effect, not only transcending the Power of the Cause, but even contrary to the Bias of its Nature!----Or how is it possible they should be *meritoriously* (any more than efficiently) the Cause of a Goodness and Excellency, infinitely superior to any Thing in themselves!----Or how can they rationally be supposed to have so much as the Force of a *Condition* in the Divine Promises, *intitling* the Doer of them to infinite Blessings at the Hand of God; when at the same time they have in them *Nothing* at all of the formal Nature of true *Goodness* or *moral Excellency*, to fit them for his Regards as a *moral Governor*!

But I proceed to another Observation, referring to the *Apostle's Reasoning* here----That from this it must follow,

(2) That to suppose him excluding *Works* of the Unregenerate under every other possible Notion, save this only of their being morally *Good*, would by no means reach his profess'd *Design*, which is to exclude *Boasting*. For so long as the moral *Goodness* of these *Works* is maintain'd, the main Spring of *Boasting* still remains. To suppose them excluded under every other Notion whatever, but not under this, would therefore not answer the *End* aim'd at in their Exclusion, which is to shut out all *Boasting*.

Moreover,

(3.) It will hence clearly follow, that *every Scripture-Instance* of excluding *Works* for the sake of excluding *Boasting*, must design to exclude them under this Notion, as vainly imagin'd to be *morally Good* before God: since (as we have seen before) 'tis impossible, that *Boasting* in that Case should otherwise be excluded.

But to go on to another *Text* of Scripture. ----

The Truth I am defending, is clearly held forth, I think, in those other Words above-quoted from 1 Cor. 4. 7. *Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou, that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory (or boast) as though thou hadst not received it?* The *Design* of the Apostle here appears to me
very

very much the same, as in the former Text ; namely, to cut off all Pretences for *Boasting* (whether of the *Corinthian* Professors, or their Teachers) in their respective Attainments, under the Advantages of the Gospel, either in point of special Grace, or extraordinary Gifts. And the *Medium* he makes Use of here, is for Substance the same too ; namely, the shutting out *Works*, supposed to have moral Worthiness in them, from being the procuring Cause of their Attainments, and resolving them into the sovereign Pleasure of the *Divine Donor* ; to whom they stood Debtors for all their Receipts.--- Here are two Questions or Demands. The First is, *Who maketh thee to differ ?* To which the Answer, here plainly imply'd, is, That Divine Benefactor, who is the sovereign Author of every good and perfect Gift. It's He, that puts the *Distinction* upon Men, when they excell others in valuable Attainments. 'Tis the Result of his free Favour. 'Tis not any antecedent moral Excellency in any thus distinguish'd, that makes the Difference : Or in Scripture-Language, *Not by Works of Righteousness, which they have done.*---- The other Question is, *What hast thou, that thou didst not receive ?* q. d. These your distinguishing Attainments under the Gospel, in which you are so apt to glory, are you not indebted for them to the *Father of Lights and God of all Grace*, who has freely given them to you ! Whether as to sanctifying Grace, or extraordinary Gifts, are you not a meer *Receiver* ! Had you Power in your self to acquire them ; or Merit, to purchase them ! Or with regard to *special Grace*, had you even any antecedent moral or spiritual Excellency, to intitle you to it ! Surely, you must confess, It is *not of Works*. For you could do None *worthy of God*, before you receiv'd his special Grace : And here you was a meer *Receiver*, in Opposition to any Right whatever, or active Acquirement, on your part. You are in every respect wholly a *Debtor* to the absolute Grace of the Divine Giver.--- Thus, taking the Apostle's *Question* in this its natural and unforc'd Meaning, there appears in it a just Foundation for his Conclusion, which follows, by way of Query again,--- *Now if thou didst receive it, why then dost thou glory, as if thou didst not receive it !* A very close Expostulation, and carrying in it Matter of full Conviction to the Reason and Conscience of those he wrote to, that they had no possible Room left for *boasting*, on the Account of any their distinguishing Attainments. It's good Argument why Men should not glory in any Gifts of *Nature*, or common *Providence*, because these are what they have received. But surely these were not the only, nor the principal Things, that the Apostle most probably had in his Eye, or that the *Corinthians* so boasted in. And though extraordinary Gifts, of the supernatural

tural and miraculous kind, are included here ; yet certainly *special Grace* is by no Means to be thought excluded, as some pretend. For how would this comport with the *Apostle's* Reasoning and with his main Design here ? Would not a proud Elation of Mind in any under the View of a supposed moral Goodness in their Endeavours to get *special Grace*, be as really in the *Apostle's* Sense *Glorying* or *Boasting*, as an undue Lifting-up themselves under the View of their Endeavours to acquire those extraordinary *Gifts* ? And is not the attaining of *special Grace* by the Creature's own Doings, a rather higher Ground of *Boasting*, than what appears in the other Case ; by how much 'tis of a more excellent Nature and superior Importance ? If the one's being *received* is a Consideration sufficient to silence all *Boasting*, in that Particular, why should not the same Consideration be allowed equal Force in the Case of the other, which is as much *received* also ? Surely, by Parity of Reason, at least, the *Apostle's* Rebuke to the *Corinthian* Boaster is applicable to the Case of *glorying* in an imagin'd moral Goodness of unregenerate Men's Endeavours to attain *converting Grace*. For any, upon a suppos'd Attainment of this Grace, to ascribe it to an imaginary moral Excellency in his own Efforts, while unregenerate, seems evidently to be a *glorying in it, as though he received it not* ; and so brings him under the Correction of the *Apostle's Rod*, as here exercised.

The Truth, as it appears to me, is (1.) That all *Works* morally good and approvable before God, are utterly *impracticable* by the fallen Creature, whilst unrenewed, and under the Dominion of Sin ; as, Sir, you concede the Subject of our present Controversy to be.--- And (2.) That for a poor Sinner, in this his guilty, impotent, and forlorn State, to be elated or puffed up with a vain Imagination of its being in his Power (even under the highest Refinements of Nature, with the Help of meer common Grace) to perform Acts of proper moral Virtue, or true Holiness, pleasing and acceptable to God ; I say, for such a one to cherish this Principle, to profess it, and to pursue it in Practice, attempting Duties upon this Presumption, and governing his Hopes of Success in Conformity to it, This is nothing less than that *Boasting* and spiritual *Vain-glory*, which the Gospel-Scheme of Salvation every where *excludes*.---And then (3.) Because this *Boasting* is what arises from the *Pride* of the carnal Mind, together with Ignorance of the Depth of that Ruin of a fallen State Mankind are born in ; and hath no Foundation at all in the Nature of Things, in the Truth of Fact, or in the Scheme of the Gospel ; greatly derogates from the Glory of redeeming Mercy, and from the Honour of the blessed Mediator ; denies discriminating Grace to-
wards

wards the saved of the Lord, and lessens their sensible Obligations in point of Gratitude ; whilst at the same Time it exalts the fallen Creature, quiets him in his own Sufficiency, tempts him to delay his Concern about Salvation, leads him to trust in himself when essaying Conversion to God, and stands a Bar in the way of his Coming to God by Jesus Christ, for Mercy absolutely free, and unpromised, as to any Duties and Doings of his : I say, Because this *Boasting* is such a moral Evil in it self, and is pregnant with so many other Evils, hence it is undoubtedly, that the Holy Ghost in Scripture so repeatedly and with so much Earnestness insists upon the *Exclusion* of it.---And (4) Because this Sin of *Boasting* is so inseparably connected with the Opinion of true moral Goodness in the *Works* of the Unregenerate, as that it is impossible to *exclude* or reject the former, without also *excluding* and disallowing the latter (the Reason whereof is exceeding obvious, viz. because they that entertain that Opinion, do entertain a *false* Notion of their own Excellency ; and they that build upon a false Notion of their own Excellency, must needs be *puffed up* and *boast in themselves*) therefore the one is excluded for the sake of excluding the other. *Not of Works, lest any Man should boast.*----*What hast thou*, in point of supposed true Goodness and vital Religion, *that thou hast not received*, at the hand of Divine sovereign Grace ? *Now if thou didst receive it thus, why dost thou boast, as though thou hadst not thus received it ; Or, as if it were not of Grace, but of Works ?*

I shall now shut up the present Argument, with this summary Recollection of all the foregoing Reasonings under it. Since 'tis indisputably evident from the several Scriptures above recited, that all *Works*, preceeding Salvation actually begun in Conversion, are in the Gospel-Scheme *excluded* for the Sake of excluding all *Boasting* : ---And since it thence follows with like Clearness, that they are excluded under every *Notion* of them, that contains Reasons or Grounds of *Boasting* : --- And since it is abundantly evident, that consider'd under the Notion of their having true *moral Goodness* in them, they contain the Grounds and Reasons of *Boasting* : ---And since it has been evidenc'd, that the Holy Ghost in Scripture doth actually and on Design *exclude* them under *this* Notion, that thereby all *Boasting* might be excluded : --- And lastly, since it hath been made appear, that *Glorying*, or *Boasting*, in the Case before us, is so founded in or inseparably connected with *that Idea* of the Doings of the Unregenerate (their having some moral Excellency or true Holiness in them) as that it is impossible, such *Glorying* should otherwise be totally *excluded*, than by excluding all such *Works*, consider'd

der'd under that Idea :---From these several Considerations laid together, I shall take it at present for a Point fully prov'd, That all *Works* of the Unregenerate, supposed to have the said Idea annexed to them, are under that Notion certainly *excluded*, for the sake of excluding *Boasting*, from the Business of Sinners being bro't into a State of Salvation.---The other Point proposed, was---

[2.] That all *Works* of the Unregenerate, done by them whilst such, and respected by them as morally good, being thus *excluded*, it is a necessary Consequence, That they can't possibly be included in the *Covenant-Promise*, as reveal'd *Conditions*, upon the Performance of which, God has engag'd to confer *special Grace* upon Sinners.---- This appears to me a genuine and clear Inference from what has been said. For, if all Performances and Endeavours of Men, previous to a renewed State, are, as respected under the Notion of their being morally Good before God, *excluded* the Business of their being brought to Salvation (or, which is the same in Effect, deny'd to have any *Existence*, as consider'd under that formal Notion) in Order that thereby all *Boasting* in and of themselves might be *shut out*; it must hence inevitably follow, that they can have no possible Place in the Gospel-Covenant, as *Conditions*, to which God has made a Promise of *special Grace*.----If, as consider'd under that Notion of their being *morally good*, or holy and spiritual, in God's Account, the Scripture denies them any actual Being, it must necessarily deny them also, as consider'd under the Notion of their being *Conditions*, in a *Promise* of special Grace made to the Doings of the *Unregenerate*. Otherwise, we make the Gospel solemnly to establish that for a *Condition*, which at the same time it has excluded as a meer *Non-Entity*; having *no Existence*, as morally consider'd, but in the vain Imagination of the haughty Sinner. What is this, but to make the Gospel as it were *destroy it self*? Here were "*sad Havock*" indeed!

That which remains now before me, is, to obviate some *Objections*, that may perhaps be brought against me, to invalidate my Reasonings in Answer to you, and my Way of arguing from such Texts of Scripture as I have alledg'd against you.----And here it may be suggested in Opposition to me,

OBJECT. I. *That I have all along argu'd upon a false Hypothesis, founded on a Misconstruction of those Scriptures, which speak of Works as excluded, for the Sake of excluding Boasting; since they are only Works of the Ceremonial Law, not of the Moral.*

To which I answer: The Scriptures, in the Places consider'd, speak of *Works*, indefinitely, without any explicit Limitation to a particular Law;

Law ; and, as I think, without any such Restriction necessarily imply'd. Be it the Law of *Moses*, as contradistinguish'd to the Law of Faith, that is in general refer'd to, and in all its Views, whether as *Moral*, *Ceremonial*, or *Judicial*, still according to the reveal'd Scheme of Salvation it stands a firm and unalterable Truth, *Not of Works, lest any Man should Boast*. Why then should the Sense be restrain'd, as in the Objection ! But I observe further, That the true Scripture-Idea of *Works* in the Texts refer'd to, is of such Latitude as to extend to Works of appearing *moral* Goodness, done in an unregenerate State, is evident from the Name and Style, by which the *Works excluded* are sometimes expressly characteriz'd : as in in that Text, *Not by Works of Righteousness, which we have done, &c.* And in those Places, *As many as are of the Works of the Law, are under the Curse--- But the Man that doeth them, shall live in them.---For Moses describeth the Righteousness which is of the Law, that the Man which doeth these Things, shall live by them.---* Which are Descriptions most properly applicable to Works of the *Moral* Law, and seem more immediately to have them in View.---Yet further, I argue from the profess'd *Design* of Works being *excluded*. How is it possible to exclude all *Boasting*, if only *Ceremonial* Works were excluded ? Do such Works only leave Room for *Boasting* ? Nay, since Works of the *Ceremonial* Law are but Matters of Indifference in themselves, how do these contain any Grounds at all of *Boasting*, save on the Account of a supposed *moral* Goodness in them ; in virtue of their being reducible to the *moral* Law, as so many Instances of that general Duty herein requir'd, Subjection to God's revealed Will ? Besides, as all the World, *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, are equally concern'd in the Gospel-Scheme of Salvation, why should it not in this important Point of *excluding Works* for the sake of *excluding Boasting*, be interpreted so as to reach every one's Case ; and comprehend, not only those attached to the *Levitical* Law, but even the greatest *Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and Strangers from the Covenants of Promise*, knowing nothing further than the *Law written on their Hearts*, and being (as the Scripture speaks) *a Law unto themselves* ? And it is to my Purpose, to observe, such were the *Ephesians* (not *Jews*, but Sinners of the *Gentiles*) such the *Corinthians*, and such the *Romans*, to whom the Apostle is writing in the *Epistles*, whence I have alledged the principal *Texts*, from which I have been reasoning against your Opinion, and which account for *their* (as well as the *Jews*) Salvation as of *Grace*, and *not of Works*. A sure Sign (I think) that the seeming Virtues or moral Endeavours of the soberest *Heathen*, and by Consequence the best Works of *Unregenerate* Professors under the

the Gospel, are in the Apostle's Sense *excluded* for the sake of excluding *Boasting*; and not *Jewish* Observances only, as is by some pretended. However, if still this Objection sticks with any, I refer them to Mr. *Edwards* on *Justification* (Pag. 29, to 50.) where this Point is distinctly handled, and the Objection answer'd, I think, in the most satisfactory Manner.

Now, Sir, if you are pleas'd to except against the Fairness of my Management in this Debate,

OBJECT. 2. *That I make frequent Use of the Term, WORKS, which is of a doubtful Signification, without a determinate Idea, and without any due Distinction---*

I answer, That in general by *Works*, in this Controversy, it seems to me agreed between us, are meant the apparent *good Works* of Persons not yet thoroughly converted to God, whom we usually call *Unregenerate*. And I use a Variety of Terms, such as *Doings, Endeavours, Seekings, Strivings, &c.* because I would speak comprehensively, and include all possible *Works* of the *Unregenerate*, which you may be disposed to call *good Works*, and to which you are apt to conceive a *Promise* of special Grace made in Scripture.---Though I often speak of *Works* that appear to carry *moral* Excellency in them, I don't mean to confine the Idea to what is commonly call'd moral Honesty, Sobriety, social Virtue, or the like, exclusive of what is of the devotional Kind, and a more *Evangelical* Aspect: but I take into the Idea and really intend all those Attainments, Performances, and Qualifications, of whatever Sort, that enter into the Character of any Man *seeming to be religious, but deceiving his own Heart*. In short, Sir, I include in the Term, *Works*, every Idea (i. e. every Idea that can in Truth agree to the Case of one not yet thoroughly converted, but still under the Dominion of Sin) which you have been pleas'd to put into your *Description* (Pag. 25.) of the *Man*, whom you hold to be the Object of a *Promise of Divine efficacious Aid, or special Grace*.---This, I think, is plain enough from the Current of my Language every where through the whole of what I have said.

But to proceed---If you object to me again,

OBJECT. 3. *That I seem sometimes to insinuate, as if the Opinion held by you in this Matter were too nearly connected with the Doctrine of Merit; though you have expressly renounced all Pretence of Merit in the present Case, and therefore (as you imagine) are far from teaching or setting up that Boasting, which the Gospel designs to exclude---*

To this I reply, in the following Observations,

1. That this Objection labours of a grand *Mistake* (already sufficiently expos'd) as if the Exclusion of *Merit* in *Works* were an intire

intire Exclusion of *Boasting*. For, as we have seen, there are *other Notions* of these Works, that contain Grounds of *Boasting* (in the Apostle's Sense) besides that of their being *meritorious*: And it is the evident Design of the Gospel to exclude *Works* under *every* Notion of them, that (being admitted) would let in *Boasting*.---- However, in Order to a more full answering the Objection, it seems necessary to observe,

2. That the Word *Merit* is variously to be understood, either in a *high* and *strict*, or in a *lower* and more *large* Sense. You know very well, Sir, the usual Distinction between Merit of *Condignity* and Merit of *Congruity*. And here according to the Sense in which you would be understood, when you say you exclude *Merit*, so must the Answer be.

If we understand *Merit* in the *absolute* and most *proper* Sense, then I say, it must be a great Mistake, to suppose that the excluding or denying of *this* only amounts to the full Sense of the Scripture, when it excludes *Works*, for the Sake of excluding *Boasting*.----But I persuade my self, Sir, there's no Need of arguing this Point with you. I think, you must intend the *lower* Kind of *Merit*, or *Merit* in the *large* Sense, when you *exclude* it from the Works of the Unregenerate. Now by this Kind of *Merit*, I conceive, must be intended at least some moral Excellency, true Worthiness, Goodness, or Virtue in their Works, before God. And is this, Sir, the *Merit*, which you renounce? Is the Exclusion of this Kind of *Merit* the just Import of your Expressions, where you tell us (P. 24.) *In his* (i. e. Christ's *Right we must plead* (viz. for special Grace) *who has purchased this Benefit for us* ; and not in the *Virtue or Merit of any Thing we do*, which we can only humbly consider as *meer Qualifications*, &c. Do you (I say) really mean here to disclaim all Pretence of *Merit*, in the lowest and largest Sense of the Word, as above explain'd? If so, I answer then, there must be a palpable *Inconsistency* in your Scheme: Since you strenuously insist, throughout your Letter, that God in dispensing his *special Grace* acts not in the Character of an absolute Proprietor or sovereign Benefactor, at perfect Liberty to give or to withhold the Benefit as he pleaseth, but only in the *Capacity of a moral Governor and righteous Judge of the Behaviour and Improvements of his Creatures*, and dispensing it or not according to their *Conduct in the Use of the Talent they've receiv'd*. Now, if this be so, I beg to be inform'd what that *Behaviour of the Creature* is, according to you, which is thus the Rule of God's Dispensation in this Matter. Can it be any other than a true *moral Behaviour*, in its formal Nature, pleasing to God? Is it possible, that the *Creature's Behaviour* should

should pass the Test with him as a *moral Governor and righteous Judge*; and yet at the same Time not have any true *moral Goodness* in it! Which it cannot have, and so cannot have the lower Kind of Merit, Worthiness, or recommending Excellency, unless it be as well *formally*, as *materially* good. How evidently impossible the Case! And how absurd the Supposition! For a Thing to *be*, and *not* to be, at the same Time and in the same Respect, is scarce a greater Contradiction.

Now since there is this notorious Incoherence in your Scheme, and both Parts of a Contradiction can't be true, one of the repugnant Principles you must certainly give up. And give up which you will, for ought I can see, your Scheme must fall with it. For if you part with your Principle, of *God's acting in this Affair as a moral Governor and righteous Judge of his Creatures Behaviour and Improvements*, making this the *Rule* according to which he dispenseth his *special Grace* to the fallen Creature; I say, if you give up this Point, it must then unavoidably follow, that God herein acts only as an *absolute Proprietor and sovereign Benefactor*: which being all that Mr. Cooke or I contend for, there's an End of the Debate. Or, if you give up the other Principle (which you say you allow) of *the fallen Creatures pleading (viz. for special Grace) MEERLY in the Virtue of what CHRIST hath done for us, or in Right of his Purchase, and not at all in the Virtue or Merit of any Thing we do*; I say, if you relinquish this Point, then it follows, for ought I can see, that you must assert a sort of *Merit or Worthiness*, even in the *Works* of an unregenerate Man, who is interested hereby in a *Promise*, which passes over to him a *Right* to special Grace, *pleadable* before God. But what a vain Imagination is this (as shewn before) and how contrary to the whole Tenor of the Scriptures!----In short, when you profess to *allow*, that we are *not* at all to *plead in the Virtue or Merit of any Thing we do*, your Meaning must be, either to teach us, that although in Fact there is true *Virtue or Merit* in our Doings, some moral Goodness or Worthiness, which speaks them proper *Qualifications* for the Benefit of special Grace, and although the actual Subject of these Qualifications has a *Right* to this Grace passed over to him by God's *Promise*, yet nevertheless that we must not *plead* this Right, when asking for the promis'd Benefit; in which View of your Words, you renounce, not the *Virtue or Merit of what we do*, but only the making it a *Plea*.----A poor lean Concession! and not half enough, to clear you of setting up that *Boasting*, which the Gospel *excludes*.---Or, if you mean any Thing further, it must be to renounce, either the very *Being* of this *Virtue or Merit* in the unregenerate Man's Doings, or else only the

Right passed over to him in the *Promise*, and made sure to him by Means of such his *virtuous* and *worthy* Doings. Now, if we take your Words in the *latter* Sense, it will be palpably inconsistent with the whole Scope of your *Letter* : And if in the *former* Sense, this too will be inconsistent with the many Expressions, wherein you seem evidently to suppose a Degree of moral Excellency and formal Goodness, or acceptable Obedience to God, in the Doings and Endeavours of the *Man solicitous for Salvation, though not yet thoroughly converted*.---But, Sir, if we would be intirely consistent with the *Gospel*, which utterly *excludes* all *Boasting*, we must teach the Sinner, not merely to forbear *pleading* in Virtue or Merit of any Thing he does, but likewise to renounce the *Virtue or Merit* it self, even all of the lower kind, and in the large Sense of the Words. Otherwise, as I've already argu'd, that *Boasting*, which the Gospel shuts out can never effectually be *excluded* : but there will always lie in the Sinner's way a very invincible Temptation, to *trust in himself that he is righteous, or to look to be saved by Works of Righteousness, which he hath done, and not according to God's Mercy, by the Washing of Regeneration*.----Nevertheless what saith the Scripture ? *Not of Works, lest any Man should boast*.

The Inconsistency here urged against your Principles, I acknowledge, Sir, is nothing peculiar to you : but is common to those in the *Arminian* Scheme. They all profess wholly to disclaim the Plea of *Merit*, in the Case before us ; and yet they assert, with you, God's dispensing his *efficacious Aid* or *special Grace*, not as an absolute sovereign Benefactor, but as a *moral Governor and righteous Judge of the Behaviour and Improvements of his Creatures* : A Principle, I think, necessarily implying the Supposition of some inherent *true moral Excellency* in the Sinner's Doings ; which is *Merit*, of the lower kind. And this *Worthiness* they hold (with you) to be the *Qualification* for receiving of *special Grace* : to which Grace they also with you assert a *Right*, by God's Promise, passed over to the Man so qualified. Tho' in some Sense they renounce the Doctrine of *Merit*, yet they speak of the *Grace* of God even in the first special Instance, as a *stipulated* Good and of the unrenew'd Man's *Endeavours* (whilst such) as the *Covenant-Condition*, &c. Which, at least, seems to be setting up a *Merit* of Congruity. Thus, Sir, in common with you, those in the *Arminian* Scheme advance Opinions mutually repugnant, and *build again the Things which they had destroy'd*.

In brief, Sir, You and they may soften your Language as you please, and be it as it will in the point of Consistency with *yourselves*, yet so long as you are for a *Method of Grace*, according to the Scheme de-

fended in your *Letter*, as it appears from what has been said, that you do in Reality, include and abett that *Glorying* or *Boasting*, which the Gospel of Reconciliation forever *excludes*, I must think you so far not consistent with the *Scripture*. The *Scripture* says, *Not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy God saved us*. And again, *He hath saved us, and called us with an holy Calling, not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace*. Whereas, your Scheme tells us, on the contrary, That although common Grace be *absolutely* given, yet *special Grace*, by which only we are effectually called and saved, is not given absolutely, in a sovereign Manner, but in a federal Way, in Correspondence with certain Divine *Promises* and *Stipulations*, by which God has passed over to us a *Right, at least a conditional Right* to the promised Blessing, and which he executes as a *moral Governor and righteous Judge of his Creatures Behaviour and Improvements*, adjusting his Dispensations of saving Grace by the *Use they have made of the Talent committed to them, &c.* Of all which Talk I can make no other Construction, but this; *Not according to his own Purpose and Grace, but according to our Works, He calls us, and saves us*, i. e. initially : Which is the very Reverse of the *Scripture-Account* of the true Method of Grace.----But it may be, you will be for *compounding* the Matter; and say, that it is according to both *Grace* and *Works* together; and that when Salvation is ascrib'd to *Grace*, or deny'd to *Works*, such *Scripture-Expressions* are not to be understood absolutely, as if it were *of Grace* in an *exclusive* Sense, or as if it were *not of Works* in a *subordinate* Sense: for it may be of *both* in different Respects, concurring and uniting in this Affair; and so far as it is of the *latter* 'tis, only as this has the Place of a *Condition* in the Promise of *special Grace*.----But for Answer, I must own (Sir) for my part, I cou'd never tell how to reconcile this Notion to those express Words of the Apostle: *If by GRACE, then is it no more of WORKS: But if it be of WORKS, then is it no more GRACE*. According to the Apostle here, it seems, *Works* and *Grace* can't be so blended together, as you may apprehend, in this Affair of Sinners being brought into a State of Salvation. Because, for Salvation to be *by Grace*, and to be *of Works*; or (which means the same) to be *according to God's Purpose and Grace*, and to be *according to our Works*, i. e. supposed *Works of Righteousness* antecedent to Regeneration; these are real *Contraries*, mutually expelling each other, so that if the one takes Place, the other of Consequence is excluded. *Otherwise GRACE is no more Grace: or, Otherwise WORK is no more Work*. Here the Apostle teaches us thus much, at least; That to suppose Salvation to be *of Works*, is to destroy the Nature

Nature or deny the Being of *Grace* : and on the contrary, to suppose it to be *by Grace*, is to destroy the Nature or deny the Being of *Works*. How then can these unalterable *Opposites* possibly be made to agree in this Affair ? The Attempt is vain, and will be found an eternal Impossibility, so long as the Gospel *excludes Works* in the Manner it does, with a View to secure the Honour of God's *Grace*, and intirely remove every Ground of Man's *Boasting*. For some Ground of *Boasting* will remain, so long as Salvation is imagin'd to be *of Works*, whether in Regard of any true moral *Worthiness* in them, or any *conditional Right* annexed to them, which God as a *moral Governor* is supposed to act in Consideration of, when he bestows his *special Grace* on the fallen Creature. If *Works* of an unregenerate Man, whilst such, be allow'd the Power of a suspending *Condition*, or That to which a *Promise* of converting *Grace* is made, in Virtue whereof a *Right* to it is passed over to him,---this is such a Scheme as flatters the natural *Pride* of his Heart, leads to a Claim of *Merit* (at least of the lower kind) and opens a wide Door to *Boasting* and *Vain-glory*.

But, if it be further objected here,

OBJECT. 4. *That, granting the Works of Unregenerate Men, (suppos'd morally good) to be by the Gospel, for the sake of excluding Boasting, all of them excluded from being (under that Notion) the Condition, to which a Promise of special Grace is made ; and granting, that to make Works conditional in this Case, as consider'd under that Notion, would be to establish that Boasting, which the Gospel excludes : yet it will by no Means follow upon these Concessions, that the Hypothesis of their being made conditional, is so essentially connected with and so intirely founded in that Notion of them, as that we cannot rationally suppose them consider'd, in the conditional Promise under some other Respect or View, fairly consistent with the perfect Exclusion of Boasting.*

For Answer to this plausible Pretence, it may suffice to say in brief ; ---I know of none that deny God's acting in this Affair as a sovereign Proprietor and absolute Benefactor, who do not at the same Time assert his acting in it as a *moral Governor and righteous Judge of the Behaviour of his Creatures*. But how is it possible, He should act in this last Character, without respecting at all the *moral Goodness* of their Behaviour ? Can he be suppos'd, while acting in this Capacity, and so necessarily having an Eye to his Rule of Government, yet to have no Eye to the *Goodness* of that *Behaviour*, in point of its Conformity to his preceptive Will, although it be the establish'd *Condition*, on which he has suspended his Promise of special Grace ? If the *Behaviour* have true *moral Excellency* in it, why should

not *this* be both respected in the conditional Promise, and ey'd by him in his Execution of it ?---Nor am I able to conceive what *other possible Notion* of Men's Behaviour, any can suppose *respected* in making this *Conditional* of the promis'd Blessing, but what, if receiv'd and acted upon, will certainly, be *inconsistent* (as well as that of *moral Goodness*) with the intire and absolute *Exclusion* of *Boasting*, in a Gospel-Account.---To reduce the Controversy here to an Issue, I wou'd a little further argue the Point, after I have observ'd, That in whatever *other View* or *Notion Works* may possibly be consider'd in this Affair, yet if the *Notion* of their *moral Goodness* be at all taken in, it seems to me impossible perfectly to exclude *Boasting*. I say then, Either this *Notion* of *moral Goodness*, in the *Works* of Unregenerate Men is quite *excluded* from this Affair of their being made *Conditional* of the Bestowment of special Grace : Or it is *not* quite excluded.---Now, if you assume, and say, That this *Notion* of them is *intirely excluded*, i. e. if you give up the Point of their *moral Goodness*, and allow that there is nothing of *true Rectitude* or *godly Sincerity* in the best *Endeavours* of the Man (according to your Description) in a *middle State*, neither *relentless* nor yet *thoroughly converted* : To this I reply, that upon such a View of the Case it don't appear to me in the least rational, to suppose *Endeavours* of this Kind made *conditional* in a Divine Promise, upon any *other Notion* of them whatever. If God in dispensing special Grace to such a Man, does at all respect his *Endeavours*, as the Consideration upon which he acts, He must (I think) respect them either as *morally good*, or *not*.---But now to suppose Him acting herein upon the Consideration of *Works not morally good*, is to suppose a Thing that has no Congruity with the Idea of a *moral Governor and righteous Judge*. If you don't maintain the Being of some true moral Rectitude and *godly Sincerity* in these Doings of the striving Sinner, while you plead for their *Conditionality*, methinks you had better *divest* them of this too, in Honour to God's rectoral Holiness, rather than suppose Him annexing a great and precious *Promise* to a morally unfit *Condition*, or dispensing a promised Blessing without respecting any *Goodness* in his Creature's Behaviour, tho' made the Rule of his Administration. I cannot but think it infinitely more honorary to God, to suppose with *us*, that in this Affair of dispensing special Grace to the Unregenerate, He acts as a *sovereign Benefactor*, out of absolute, and (meaning in Opposition to your conditional Promise) out of *unpromised*, and irrespective Mercy, *according to the meer good Pleasure of his Will*. I think, you must be oblig'd to come to this Conclusion, if you renounce all Pretence of *moral Goodness* in the Condition you plead for ; since, without your supposing

posing some true *moral Excellency* in the Creatures *Behaviour*, I don't see how you can possibly reconcile its being a *Divinely establish'd Condition* in this Affair with the Idea of God as a *moral Governor* and *righteous Judge*.--But after all, it may be you will on the other hand assume, and say, That you allow of some true *moral Goodness* in these Doings of the seeking striving Sinner, though not yet intirely devoted to God in Christ, and allow their being (at least partly) under *that Notion* made *conditional* in the Case before us. Now if so you assume, then I answer, That *whatever other Notion* you may imagine respected in making the Sinners Endeavours *conditional* of the Bestowment of special Grace, and however consistent you may suppose *that* to be with the *Exclusion* of *Boasting*; Yet if this Notion of *moral Goodness* be at all admitted in the Case, some Ground of *Boasting* certainly remains, which (as we have seen) the Gospel-Scheme Salvation intirely *excludes*, and with a View to the Exclusion of this does *exclude* all *Works* that contain any Grounds of *Boasting*, as do these pretended *good Works*, done before converting Grace, and made *conditional* of it.----In short, the Gospel (as often observed) *excludes* such *Works*, for the sake of excluding *Boasting*. It *excludes* Works, denies their very Being or Existence, under the Notion of *good Works*, and consequently denies their *Conditionality*: which is, to all Intents and Purposes, sufficiently to exclude *Boasting*.----Whereas now your Scheme, which sets up *Works* of the Unregenerate for a *Condition* in the Covenant of Grace, does on the contrary suppose the actual *Existence* of *good Works* before Conversion, and claims a peculiar Honour for them in the Affair of Man's Salvation: which certainly leaves Room for that *Boasting*, the Gospel designs to *exclude*.----If after all I have offer'd from Scripture you still dispute there being any Ground of *Boasting*, in this Case, I will offer this plain Argument from Reason, for your Conviction.----For the fallen Creature, not yet *renewed in the Spirit of his Mind*, but *under the Dominion and Guilt of Sin* (as is the Case of the *striving Sinner* according to your own Description) for *this Man* (I say) to entertain an Opinion of *moral Rectitude* and *true Goodness* in any of his Doings or Improvements, is to entertain a *false Opinion* of *his own Excellence*: and so far as he does this, he is undoubtedly *proud* and *high-minded*, in the Account of the Gospel. And now for *this Man*, this poor empty vain Man, thus puffed up with a false Conceit of his own Doings, to stamp them with the dignifying Character of *Conditions* in God's Covenant of Grace passing over to him a *Right* to promised Blessings, This is what, I think, includes in its essential Idea that very *Boasting*, which the Gospel excludes;

or at least, you must allow, this leaves large Room for it, and lays in the Sinner's Way a powerful Temptation to this Soul-ruining moral Evil. ---- Upon these Grounds, I leave it (Sir) with you to consider seriously whether you are not, so far as you have been setting up and pleading for this *Opinion* and this *Character* of the Unregenerate Man's Doings, justly chargeable with setting up and pleading for that same *Boasting*, which the Gospel-Scheme of Salvation has most absolutely *excluded*, or deny'd any Place to in this Affair: as we have seen from a Variety of *Scriptures*. And the Construction I have made of the sacred Text, I doubt not might easily be confirm'd from the *Articles* and *Homilies* of your own Church, from the concurrent Sense of the *English Reformers*, from the publick Confessions of the *foreign* Protestant Churches, &c. which would all come in as a *Cloud of Witnesses* on my Side of the Question. But I wave human Authorities, in the present Debate.

Thus, Sir, while you rise so high in your uncandid Reflections upon Mr. *Cooke* and others with him, as even to tax them of *corrupting the Simplicity of the Gospel*, you see for what Reasons I think the Imputation, (black as it is) rebounds on your own Head. For it must needs be a warping from the true Scheme of Salvation, and so far a *corrupting* the Gospel, to set up that guilty *Boasting*, which is here condemned and *excluded*.----But this Matter must on the whole be submitted to others impartial Judgment. However, in the mean Time, I cannot refrain making here a short Remark on the obvious *Tendency* of your Opinion in the present Point, and of what you have offered in Defence of it, to check the Concern and to stifle the Convictions of *awakened* Sinners which you must confess of *dangerous* Consequence. I readily confess the Scheme you have advanced is what *Flesh and Blood* will not be likely to take much Offence at, but it would rather afford a pleasing Entertainment to the fallen Creature, and be likely to bear down and keep under his rising Fears from time to time, to sooth and hush his accusing Conscience, and while in Heart really pursuing the World as his chief Good, yet to flatter him with the Hopes of his finally obtaining Heaven too; as having the *Grace of God* well secured to him by a *conditional Promise*, and brought hereby as it were within the Command of his own *Endeavours* and *Improvements*.---- Allow me, Sir, to observe, 'Tis no Wonder at all therefore, if in a Time when Religion runs *low* among a People (as it ever will upon an awful Suspension of a special Divine Influence) Multitudes of the World go over to a *Self-pleasing* Opinion, and ridicule the Notion of any Danger by it. However, this we are well assured of, that

according as the *Work of God* has been *revived*, time after time, so that the *Truth* at the same Time revived and prevailed : and it is remarkable, through all the *Vicissitudes* that have passed over the Church, this important *Truth* which I am now pleading for, has been preserved alive, at least in the incontestible Grounds of it, in all the publick *Confessions* of the *Reformed*, from Age to Age ; nor has the contrary *Error* ever to this Day, that I can learn, obtained a Place in so much as one publick Confession of Faith, avow'd in any Protestant Church. And this is our Consolation, amidst all Dangers threatening the Truth in a Day of Degeneracy, that still the *Spirit of Truth* has the same Power and the same Grace as ever, and will not let the *Word of Truth* in any Iota of it utterly fail and perish, but will secure it in the Mouth and Heart of all that are *Christ's*, as to the great Matters of it especially.

And here, Sir, I might well enough conclude : relying on what has already been said, as sufficient to the Purpose of confirming Mr. Cooke's two Arguments, which I undertook to defend. But I must beg your Patience a little longer, whilst I add an Argument or two, that are of a more *general* Extent, and of no small Weight with me in this Controversy, and whilst I give you a few further Considerations on some Passages of your *Letter*, which hitherto I've not found a Place for.

One *Argument*, in particular, that I would a while insist on, is this. *If any Endeavours of the Unregenerate, under the Dominion and Guilt of Sin, as they are, be the Condition, to which special Grace is promised, these must be supposed so, either as Doings acceptable and pleasing to God, or else as displeasing and offensive to him.* (For I know of no Medium.) But, under neither of these Views of them, can these Endeavours be the Condition, to which special Grace is promised.---

1. Not under the Notion of their being *acceptable* and *pleasing* to God ; because there is no Foundation in *Truth* for such a Notion of them.---For the Scripture most expressly assures us, Rom. 8. 8. *They that are in the Flesh cannot please God.* By them that are in the *Flesh*, I understand, not meerly the *obstinate relentless Sinner*, but also the *Man* you describe, who though *seriously concerned to become renewed* in the Spirit of his Mind, yet is not *thoroughly converted from Sin to God*, such an one, not having the *Spirit of Christ*, still in the *Flesh*, or under the Government of a *fleshly Mind*. Whatever fair *Shew* in the *Flesh* he make, yet under all his *seemingly Religiousness* he is in *Truth carnally minded* : The *Flesh* is his predominant Principle. And indeed, Sir, as you yourself have conceded, the *Man* you describe

is under the Dominion of Sin. Now such a one, says the Scripture, cannot please God.----Agreeably we are told, Heb. 11. 6. *Without Faith, it is impossible to please God.* None, I think, can doubt of its being *Faith unfeigned*, such as is a *believing with the Heart unto Righteousness*, that is here intended : Nor can it be doubted whether all that are under the Dominion of Sin, are utterly destitute of this *Faith* ; without which 'tis impossible to please God.----I might also produce here those Sayings and Reasonings of our Saviour, in Mat. 7. 17, 18. and in Chap. 12. 33, 34, 35. and in Luk. 16. 12. So Jam. 3. 12. with many other Texts might be cited, that clearly hold forth the Truth I am upon.----And I am persuaded, that the Sense I take these Scriptures in, agreeable to my Purpose, has the approving Suffrage of all *Protestant Churches* in their publick Confessions of Faith ; not excepting even the *Formulas* of your own Church, as before observ'd. And here I could readily turn you to many Passages, full to my Design, in your *Articles*, and *Homilies*, if not your *Liturgy* too. But for Brevity I omit it at present.----And now, Sir, if the Reverend *Compilers* of your own publick Standards, with other eminent *Reformers*, agreed to that Construction of the sacred Text, which our *Author*, whom you oppose, has espoused, I pray, consider WHOM your *Reflections* upon him and those on his Side of the Question, are equally applicable to. Do you indeed, Sir, think that these excellent Divines all built on *empty Cobwebs*,---*tortur'd the plainest Texts*,---&c. &c. to favour a *preconceiv'd humane Scheme*, not founded on the holy Scriptures, wherein it was peculiar, i. e. so far as it agreed not with the Scheme of those on your Side in this Controversy !---

But I return from this Digression, and go on with the *Argument*.----- How is it possible, Sir, that the Unregenerate Man's Doings should be pleasing to God, so long as his Person, as under the Dominion and Guilt of Sin, is both odious to the Divine Holiness, and obnoxious to revenging Justice ? Or how is it possible, since he is not vitally and savingly united to Christ, and so not actually interested in the Merits of the Mediator, by whom only we have Access to the Father, that any of the Sinner's Doings should be pleasing to God ? For, are we not accepted in the Beloved ? And are not the very Saint's spiritual Sacrifices only acceptable to God by Jesus Christ ? How then can you imagine the Unregenerate Man's Doings acceptable, while he does not come to God by the Mediator, nor has him an Advocate for him with the Father ? And if you consider the infinite Contrariety there is between the Purity of the Divine Nature, and the polluted Doings of the most refin'd Creature
under

under Sin's Dominion, how can you conceive it possible, that any the best Endeavours of such a Creature should be pleasing to God? How can he be supposed, in any fair Consistence with his unspotted Holiness, to act in Character of a *moral Governor and Righteous Judge of the Behaviour of his Creature*, even while answering Sinners Cries for Mercy, since their very best Devotions, as void of all true Faith and godly Sincerity, must needs appear, at the Bottom, but *selfish, carnal and impure* in his Sight?---Whatever Aids of the *Holy Spirit* such may experience, yet while under the *Dominion of Sin* it is impossible in the Nature of Things, that such with all the Help of Divine *common Grace* should be able to please God in the Manner of their performing any Duty.---Nor can it be pleaded, that however sinful and unworthy the Performances of such are *in themselves*, yet God may accept them *for Christ's sake*. No; for, notwithstanding the Redeemer's Merits and Purchase, there is a wise Scheme or Method provided for the *Application* of Redeeming Grace: and according to the Scripture-Account of this, there's such a *Connection* establish'd here between the *Sanctification of the Spirit* and the *Sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus*, as that the Latter never takes Place on any Soul without the Former. So that only *Saints in Christ Jesus* indeed have true Communion with God and Acceptance in his Sight. Nor can any *under the Dominion and Guilt of Sin*, (which you grant to be the Case of all the *Unregenerate*) hope to make their Way into the Favour of God by any possible Services of theirs (whilst in that Situation) notwithstanding they may professedly implore Acceptance *for Christ's Sake*. Without a divine *Application* of Redemption in Effectual Calling, the Sinner's meer pleading its *Purchase* will avail nothing towards gaining the Divine Acceptance and Favour. In vain therefore is the meer *Purchase* suppos'd to be the Ground of a *Promise* to Men's Endeavours antecedent to this equally necessary *Application*. I have the rather (Sir) insisted on these Things here, because many in your Scheme appear to me exceedingly confus'd in their Tho'ts upon them, without any consistent Scheme of Principles, and indeed without any distinct Idea's at all upon these Particulars: and because of the Importance of the Things in themselves, as well as their Reference to the Point now in Debate.

I shall only add here, that the *striving* Sinner, whose *Right* (at least *conditional Right*) to special Grace, pass'd over to him by God's Promise, you contend for, *this Man* (I say) is either *under the Law*, or *under Grace*; I mean, as to his secret State before God, he is now actually either in the Covenant of the *first Adam*, or in the Covenant of the *second Adam*. He can't be in *Both* at the same

Time : or be of *Works*, and of *Faith* too. Now, if the *Sinner* be his Case, the Scripture tells us, he is *under the Curse*. (Gal. 3. 10.) And how the Man that is *under the Curse of the Law*, or (as you grant) *under the Dominion and Guilt of Sin*, should at the same Time have a *Right* to Salvation, or (which is the same Thing) to God's *special Grace*, by Virtue of a Promise in the *Gospel-Covenant*, must to my weak Understanding remain a *Paradox*, till you can favour me with some satisfactory Solution of the Difficulty. And till you have done this, I hope you'll no more upbraid those on our Side with "*corrupting the Plainness and Simplicity of the Gospel*, and in Effect making it a meer unintelligible Riddle."--- How is it possible, Sir, that Sinners actually in a *State*, and under a *Dominion*, condemn'd both by *Law* and *Gospel*, should be capable of pleasing God with their *dead Formalities* ; or be made accepted in the *Beloved*, while they are far from presenting their Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable Service !

From all these Considerations, I think it incontestible, that there's no Probability, no Possibility of the Unregenerate Man's Endeavours in Religion (whilst his State and his governing Principle are such) being in any sound Scriptural Sense *pleasing to God*.----And then, to be sure, these his Endeavours cannot consistently be pretended to be the *Condition* of promised *special Grace*, which the Blessed God in Quality of a *moral Governor and righteous Judge of his Creature's Behaviour and Improvements*, stands engaged by his Covenant to bestow in Reward of the Sinner's Endeavours.

But so much for the first Thing.

2. Nor am I able to conceive how it's possible, that any Doings which are *displeasing and offensive* to God, (as for the Principles, the Ends, and Manner of them, are the best Doings of every Unregenerate Man) should, especially under that Notion be the stated *Condition* of his obtaining special Grace, or give him a *Right* to it in Virtue of any *Promise* of God.

Surely this must to every unprejudic'd Thinker appear a deep Absurdity, or in your own Language, *perfect Nonsense*. Doubtless it will be granted me, there is a Divine *Harmony* and moral *Fitness* in the whole Constitution of the *Gospel-Covenant*, and a perfect Congruity or Suitableness to the *moral Perfections* of God running through his whole Administration of it. But what Shadow of Agreement between the *Behaviour and Improvements* of a fallen Creature actually *under the Dominion and Guilt of Sin*, contrary to the Divine Nature, therefore odious in the Sight of God,---And God's making these a *Condition* in the *Gospel-Covenant*, upon which he

has

has suspended his *Promise* of special Grace, and which accordingly as a moral Governor and righteous Judge, he makes the *Rule* and *Measure* of his Dispensations in the present Case? Are there not some of the most *inconsistent* Ideas put together here !----Can the polluted Doings of a Creature, devoid of the Image of God and under the Power of Sin, have any *Virtue* in them to recommend him to God's Favour, and to make him a meet Object of his *special Grace*, or in your own Phrase, to *qualify him for God's Help*? And if not, then I pray, what is there in these Doings, to render it at all congruous, or suitable that they should be made the *Condition* in a Divine *Promise*, and so in Virtue of *this* serve to give the fallen Creature a *Right* to special and saving Grace! Can you possibly conceive, how it should bear any *Agreement* with the rectoral *Holiness* of God, in transacting with his Creatures, to make That a *Condition* of his special Grace, which (though materially *good*, yet otherwise) in its whole moral Complexion, is infinitely *disagreeable*, and therefore *displeasing*, to the Divine Purity? What can be a more glaring Contradiction than this!

Nor will it in the least remove the Difficulty here, to say, *That by a special Act of meer sovereign Grace, purchased by Christ, these Doings, tho' in themselves truly vile and unworthy, may for Christ's sake be appointed the Condition of special Grace, consistently enough with the Honour of the Divine Holiness.* ---- For we are in this Case to form our Judgment of God's *Acts*, not upon meer Conjectures of our own Reason or Fancy, but by the infallible Revelations we find in the Oracles of God himself. Now, if we judge by this Divine Rule, it can never be made appear, that God has *published* any such *Act of Grace*, as is here supposed: This indeed is the very Fact in Question. And if no such *Act of Grace* be published in the Gospel of Christ, we may be sure that Christ never *purchased* such an one. The whole Tenor of the *Gospel-Covenant*, the Blessings whereof come to us in Virtue of the Redeemer's Purchase, discovers its perfect Harmony with God's *moral Perfections*: and shews, that all the purchased Blessings are dispensed in an invariable *Method of Grace*, so contrived by infinite Wisdom, *That God might be Just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.* How can it then with a due Reverence to God's *Holiness* and *Justice*, as represented to us in the Gospel, be imagined, that a *Conditional Right* to his special Grace should pass over to the fallen Creature, by Virtue of a *Promise* (tho' supposed to be founded on the *Merits of Christ*) made immediately to such *Doings*, as really have no *true Holiness* in them, and are wholly destitute of that *Faith unfeigned*, through which we are saved
by

by Grace, according to the Scripture Doctrine of the Evangelical Covenant. 'Tis by Faith we receive the Atonement : and only by thus receiving the Atonement, can we get a Right to the sure Mercies of the everlasting Covenant, or become (as you speak) " qualify'd " for God's Help," in a further Supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Nor will it (as some in your Scheme argue against us) do any Honour to the Mercy of God, to suppose such a Promise as you contend for : because his Name is Holy and True, as well as Merciful and Gracious. And in his Covenant of Mercy, and in all the Exercises of Covenant-Mercy, He still preserves his Truth inviolable and his Holiness perfectly unblemished. To deny a Divine Promise to any Condition, that is contrary to his Holiness and Truth, and to deny his being pleased with any Doings of a Creature under the Dominion of Sin, and which have no Degree of true moral Purity in them, is so far from lessening the Honour of Divine Mercy, that it is a Vindication of it. God's Mercy is ever a true and just and pure Mercy. His Promises of Mercy, and all his Actings upon them, never fail of being intirely consistent with and honorary to all the moral Attributes of his Nature.----And here, Sir, I would join with you (in your Pag. 20.) in " Wishing it to be more seriously consider'd, that it was the Wicked Servant (Matth. 25. 24. compar'd with Luk. 19. 22.) who represented his Lord as an hard Man, reaping where he had never sown," &c. For I desire it may be impartially examined, On which Side of the Question before us there is most danger of that wicked Servant's unjust Charge against his Lord taking Place. Whether on the Side we espouse, whose Opinion in this Particular so evidently pays united Honours to the Divine Holiness and Mercy, and appears so clearly justifiable from the Word of God, as well as the Nature and Reason of Things ?----Or on the Side you espouse, whose Opinion is such as represents the Mercy of God in a Light so apparently inconsistent with his Holiness, and represents that Doctrine which only makes these Divine Attributes appear in their true Harmony, as if it eclipsed the Glory of God's Mercy, and exhibited Him in the false and odious Character of an hard Master, i. e. like Pharaoh &c ?----For do not those on your Side, and you your self, Sir, by this Accusation you have brought against us, virtually and in true Construction openly declare it your Sentiment, that in Case the Doctrine we embrace and you impugn be true, then the Glorious God must be looked upon indeed a hard Master ?----Whereas we in our very Hearts abhor and detest this pretended Consequence from our Doctrine : and we attribute it, in those that frame such an Inference, to the Want of a consistent way

way of thinking in Religion, and more especially to the Want of a full and just Sense of the *Sinfulness* and *Misery* of that Estate, into which the Fall brought Mankind.

But, it may be, after all I have said to enforce the Argument in hand, some may attempt to weaken it by *denying* the *Disjunction*; and pretending, *That the Endeavours of the seeking striving Sinner, to which they suppose special Grace promised, are such as are neither pleasing nor displeasing to God, nor consequently are under either of these Notions made conditional of its Bestowment.*----

Now the Weakness of such a Pretence will easily appear, if we consider, that it is in the Nature of Things impossible, the Doings of a *moral Agent*, in a *moral Case*, and considered as such by a *moral Governor* and *righteous Judge*, should be neither *good* nor *evil*, and so neither *pleasing* nor *displeasing* to Him.----The Lord *weigheth Actions*, and *loveth Righteousness*, but *hateth Iniquity*. And considering fallen Man as still a Subject of moral Government, under a Law to God, and obliged by natural Bonds as a Creature to glorify Him in Body and Spirit, which are His; how is it possible, that any of his voluntary Actions should be totally indifferent, so as not to carry in them *moral Goodness*, nor yet *moral Evil*. Such an absolute *Neutrality* is what this Case will never admit of. And now according as they are truly *Works of Righteousness*, or not, so does God as a moral Governor and Judge either *approve*, or else *disapprove* them. ---The *Disjunction* then in the Case before us must forever stand: and the Pretence of any Doings, prescribed as *Conditions* to a *moral Agent*, being neither good nor evil, neither pleasing nor displeasing to a moral Governor, must be discarded as a vain and idle Pretence.----Admitting it were a possible Case, that the Doings of a *moral Agent*, acting as such, might be perfectly indifferent *in themselves*, yet if we suppose them by a *moral Governor* made the *Conditions* of a promised Benefit, they must in this View *lose* their Indifferency; and being looked on as *good*, will consequently be *amiable* and *pleasing* in his Sight.----However, if the Doings of the Unregenerate Man be indeed, (according to the Objection) neither *pleasing* nor yet *displeasing* to God, then surely they must stand for meer *Cyphers*, moral Nullities, in God's Account: and it must discover too little Reverence of the only wise God, to suppose Him, as a *moral Governor*, in a Covenant-Transaction with his fallen Creature making a very *Thing of Nought* the *Condition* of his promised Grace, and the *Rule* of his Administration as a *righteous Judge* of the Behaviour of *moral Agents*.----Can such Doings, as morally are *Nothing*, be suppos'd a *fit Consideration* for the Majesty of Heaven

to act upon, in dispensing his saving Mercies ! Such Doings as are, upon this Hypothesis, indeed but *empty Cobwebs*, can you suppose it consistent with Wisdom, that these should be (what those in your Scheme make the Unregenerate Man's Doings) *the Consideration* which God respects in dispensing his *Grace*, the immediate *Basis* of the Application of Redemption, the *Ground* of Effectual Calling and so of actual Salvation ! Has such a pretended Condition any *Meetness* to be, as it is made, the grand Hinge, on which a saving Interest in the Redeemer turns, and on which the Promise of special Grace is suspended !---Yet I must needs say, as absurd as the Supposition is, which we are upon, it seems less dishonourable to God, than either of those in the *Disjunction*, which it is brought to confute. For, to suppose the Unregenerate Man's Doings, though not morally good, yet *pleasing* to God, and in this View made the Condition of his Promise in the Case before us ; or to suppose them, although *displeasing* to God, as being morally not good, yet however made *conditional* of the Bestowment of his *special Grace* ; either of these appears rather *worse*, I think, than to suppose a perfect *Neutrality* here, and that they are under *neither* of these Views made the *Condition*, in a free Promise and sovereign Act of Grace. Nevertheless, all these Suppositions [are really absurd, and reflect on the moral Perfections of God, that none of them are to be admitted. And whatever View these *Works* antecedent to Conversion are considered in, they can no ways with any Suitableness to the Nature of Things, or to the revealed Scheme of Salvation, have this *Conditional* Form put upon them : and I believe, an Appeal might safely be made here to the Judgment of the Generality, at least of the most experienced Christians and Divines.

Here, Sir, I must seriously profess my self intirely at a Loss how to reconcile the Scheme you are upon, either with the *Humility* of saving *Faith*, or indeed with the foregoing *Humiliation*, proper to the Case of an *awakened seeking Sinner*, that is to say, if the Principles of your Letter are thoroughly received, consciously acted upon, and fully pursued in all their practical Consequences. I must ask Leave, Sir, to observe to you, that it can be but of very little Avail for our Conviction, when you tell us in solemn Manner (*Postscr. Pag. 29.*) “ *That you aim not at undermining any of the Soul-humbling Doctrines of the Gospel. No,---God forbid. I firmly believe it (say you) to be the great Design of the Gospel, to humble the Souls of Men,*” &c.---But, Sir, what signifies this Profession, so long as you espouse and promote Opinions, that run quite counter to it ?

Indeed,

Indeed, Sir, I cannot see how to reconcile your *Postscript* with the Body of your *Letter*, in this Point. You say, You don't *aim at* undermining the *humbling Doctrines* of the Gospel : and yet it is the main Design and Drift of your whole Letter to *undermine* that Doctrine touching God's *Sovereignty* in Conversion, which only is calculated for the End of effectually *humbling* the lost Sinner ; and you set your self to support that Doctrine of a *Promise* of special Grace, to the Unregenerate, on *Condition* of their own Endeavours, which so strongly tends to flatter the *Pride* of the fallen Creature, and to countenance that *Boasting* which the Gospel for ever *excludes*. You seem loath to speak out plainly the whole Truth concerning the Guilt, Pollution and Wretchedness of the Sinner's natural State ; you appear loath, that fallen Man should be represented in such impoverished and distressed Circumstances, as to be oblig'd to come (*Forma Pauperis*) in the humble Posture and Spirit of a *Beggar*, to sue for divine Alms, *without Money and without Price* ; but you would bolster him up with the Notion of a *Right*, at least a *conditional Right*, passed over to him by a divine *Promise*, made to his Cries and Endeavours, and securing to him Success ; and not leaving the sovereign God at absolute *Liberty*, either to give or to withhold as he pleaseth. Nay, upon a Supposition that God hath reserv'd such a *Liberty* to himself, and not bound himself by express *Promise*, to dispense his Grace to the Rebel-Creature, upon Condition of his own *Endeavours*, you insinuate as if in that Case God would act like a *hard Master*, &c. even notwithstanding all the condescending Invitations and gracious Encouragements which the Gospel abounds with, to the returning Sinner.----Now, surely if this be the Spirit of your Letter, I must needs say, it looks so very much like aiming to undermine the *Soul humbling Doctrines of the Gospel*, that I should have verily thought you had really *aim'd* at this, if you had not professed otherwise. And if others judge your solemn Declaration of sufficient Force to remove that Imputation, I must leave it : Only I will here remind you of Bp. Hopkins's Censure upon your Scheme, viz. That to *suppose Grace given according to Works is the Sum and Upshot of Pelagianism*.

And indeed, Sir, whether you saw the full Force and Meaning of your own Language, or not, tell me what *less* than the compleat Extent of *Pelagianism* in the Point of *Original Sin*, can in any fair Construction be made of those Passages in your *Letter* (Pag. 6, 7, 8.) where you say, “ *Indeed I cannot think it consistent with the Divine Attributes---to give Being to any of his Intelligent Creatures* ” [here you don't so much as except the Race of fallen Adam] “ *without*

“ *putting*

“ putting them into a Condition, that (every thing being considered in
 “ the whole of their Nature and Duration (would render Being desirable
 “ to them, &c.----But every Thing beyond what is just sufficient to ren-
 “ der Being desirable, even to a perfect Creature, however so obedient, I
 “ take to be Matter of meer sovereign Goodness.”---Which Paragraph
 you shut up with this Observation with reference to *Man*, that
 “ he shall not be accountable for what he never receiv’d,” &c. where, I
 suppose from the Current of your Discourse, you mean *never receiv’d*
 personally. Now, Sir, if this be your Opinion, that Mankind are
accountable only for what they (themselves, personally) *have receiv’d*,
 then it seems, what human Nature once *receiv’d* and *lost* again in *Adam*,
 our first Father and common Head, is totally excluded the *Account* ;
 and we are no longer to believe with the Apostle, That *the*
Judgment was by One (the Offence of one Man) to Condemnation, or that
in Adam all die.---If it be your Opinion, with respect to the Offspring
 of *Adam*, That God’s Perfections (as you express it) oblige him, in giving
 them Being, to put them into a Condition, that is in the whole better than
 not to be, or that (every thing consider’d in the whole of their Nature, &c.)
 would render Being desirable to them, and by no Means to put them into a
 worse Condition, but in Case of their own [i. e. personal] wilful Disobedi-
 ence : And if it be your Opinion at the same Time, That it is as
 much as God is oblig’d from his Perfections, to do for perfect and in-
 nocent Creatures, to put them into this Condition, which implies No-
 thing more than what is just sufficient to render Being desirable to
 them ; every Thing beyond this, being the Result of *sovereign Good-
 ness*, i. e. unoblig’d free Favour : I say, Sir, if these be your real
 Sentiments, then I think, it must be your Opinion, upon the whole,
 That God’s Perfections oblige him to treat innocent *Adam* and his
 Posterity ALIKE, with Respect to the Condition, which, in giving them
 Being, his Attributes did and still do oblige him to put them into.
 Nor, according to those your Principles, is he oblig’d, when giving
 Being to any pure and perfect Creature whatever, to put him into a
 Condition at all more desirable, than that which (according to you) he
 is oblig’d by his Perfections to put *fallen Man* into, when bringing
 him into Being. For all that exceeds what is just sufficient to render
 Being desirable, is more than his Perfections oblige him to, even in
 that Case, and must spring from meer arbitrary Kindness. And sure-
 ly you claim as much on the behalf, of *Adam’s* Descendants. Is this,
 Sir, the Scheme you are upon ! If so, then I think, it follows, ’tis
 your Opinion, That *Adam’s* Offspring are born pure and innocent Crea-
 tures. For a State of Sin and spiritual Death is, I think, a worse
 Condition, than that of not-being : unless a Remedy and Deliverance be

suppos'd provided in that Case. But did God's Perfections *oblige* him to make this *Provision* in our Case? Might he not, consistently with the Honour of his Goodness, have glorify'd his *Justice*, without a Remedy in the Case of *fallen Man*, even as in that of *fallen Angels*? Was it not therefore an Act of *sovereign Goodness* in Him to provide a Saviour, to raise up a second *Adam*, when we were ruin'd in the First? Yet without doing this for us, will you say, that God was *oblig'd*, in giving us Being, to put us into a *Condition* exempt from the Guilt and Pollution of *Original Sin*? Or will you chuse now to subscribe to the Doctrine of *Original Sin*, and further (to be consistent with the Principles you have advanced) say, that to be born in a State of *Sin* and *Misery*, is to have Being given us in a Condition *better*, than *not to be* at all, even though a Redeemer had not been provided, but especially since God has in Fact rais'd up a Horn of Salvation for us? In short, Sir, be but consistent, and you must either deny the Doctrine of *Original Sin*, which will be indeed to *undermine a Soul-humbling Doctrine of the Gospel*: or else, confessing this Doctrine, you must deny and renounce the main Principles defended in your *Letter*, and learn to look on poor fallen Man as having in his native Condition no other Refuge but *sovereign Goodness*, *free Grace* and *Mercy* in Christ, not in the least secured by any *conditional Promise* made to the Sinner's own impotent and polluted Doings in his unregenerate State.

Sir, to return to the main Point immediately in Debate between us, I would propose to you two Inquiries. (1.) Does not the *Right* to special Grace, which you plead for, as by a Divine *Promise* passed over to the *striving Sinner*, does not this (I say) necessarily imply an actual *Agreement* or *Reconciliation* between an offended God and his Rebel-Creature? Does it not evidently suppose, that the Lord is actually become *this Man's reconciled Covenant-God*, and oblig'd by his Justice and Veracity to bless him with all spiritual Blessings?---For it would be absurd, to assert a *Right* on the Sinner's part, with an *Obligation* on God's part, both by Virtue of a *Promise* of Grace, and yet at the same time to suppose no Agreement or Peace at all between the Parties?---And then (2.) I ask, whether it be possible, that there should be this *Reconciliation* or *Agreement* between these extream *Opposites* in Nature (i. e. whilst remaining such) a God of infinite *Holiness*, and a Creature *under the Dominion and Guilt of Sin*? Please, Sir, to turn to those Divine Declarations to the Purpose, in 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15. and 1 Job. 1. 6. Compar'd with Amos 3. 3. When you have maturely consider'd these two Inquiries please to give me the Result of

K

your

your Thoughts, and it may contribute to an easy Issue of this Debate.

I beg Leave, Sir, before I finish, to offer some Hints on a *Text*, you have press'd into your Service, which has hitherto, escaped my Notice. In the *Advertisement* before your Letter you allude to this Passage, in *Philip. 2. 12, 13. Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling: for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good Pleasure.* It were in effect charging you with Impertinence, not to suppose that you understood these Words as importing a *Promise* of *special Grace*, made to the Endeavours of Unregenerate Men under the Dominion and Guilt of Sin. Yet indeed there is not the least Colour for such a Construction of the Words, neither from the Text nor Context. There is a total Silence here, as to the Case of an *Unregenerate Man*.----So there is with regard to the Sinner's *working* being *conditional* of God's *working*. Nay, the Contrary appears, in as much as *God's working* is here considered as *prior* to Man's working, and (as such) urged as a *Motive* to it.----Neither is there any Mention made here of *converting Grace*, nor must we necessarily conceive *first Grace* to be intended here by the *Salvation* spoken of: but it may as properly mean *progressive Salvation* here, and *complete Salvation* hereafter: in which Views the Word is often used, and is so in this Epistle. (Chap. 1. 19, 28.)----Nor is the *Fear and Trembling*, here mentioned, such as is common to the Unregenerate, but may as well, and doubtless doth, intend a *filial Reverence* and *godly Fear*, peculiar to true Christians.----And the Exhortation here is expressly directed to those whom the Apostle calls *his Beloved*, and of whom he says they had *always obeyed*. A sure Sign, he did not here address such as he supposed to be *Unregenerate*.----And the Argument he uses to enforce it, is, *For it is God that worketh in you, &c.* Which runs not directly in the Form of a *Promise*, but seems only a Declaration of Fact: *q. d.* It is the Design of God's *working in you*, as he has done, and the proper Improvement you should make of *Grace received*, is, to put you upon Endeavours after progressive Sanctification, and taking Pains for the *Furtherance of your Salvation*.----Yet the Words may implicitly couch in them a *Promise*, but it is to *Saints in Christ Jesus*.----Nor would I be understood here to deny, that this Text may several Ways be adapted and apply'd for Excitation and Encouragement to the *seeking striving Sinner*, and especially for the promoting his *Humiliation*, by a Conviction of his own spiritual Impotence, and the Sovereignty

of God in the Operations of efficacious Grace, &c. However, Sir, this is no Help to your Argument.

I shall now take a brief Notice of what you have advanced in your *Letter* (Pag. 3.) where you tell us, "*Nothing can so effectually tend to cut the Sinews of all Endeavours to repent,---as even the most distant Surmise, that possibly all our Labour may be in vain.*" ---This, Sir, is to my best Understanding one of the most palpable Mistakes. And if applied to any important Business in humane Life, will be found contrary to plain Fact, in our daily Experience and Observation. Doth not the Husbandman *plow in Hope*, without the least Certainty of Success? Doth not the Mariner sail in dangerous Seasons of the Year, and in Times of War? Doth not the Merchant adventure his Substance across the Sea to foreign Countries, even when *Sailing is dangerous*? And do these Men act without any the most distant *Surmise* of the Possibility of Disappointments in their Affairs? Or in Case of Sickness, won't Men send for the *Physician* and *use many Medicines*, notwithstanding apparent Hazard of never recovering? How unjustifiable then must be the Conduct of Sinners, if in a Case of infinitely greater Importance, and of eternal Consequence, they suffer any *distant Surmise of all their Labour's being in vain, to cut the Sinews of their Endeavours*! Ought they not in this most momentous Case, if they would *shew themselves Men* and consistent Agents, to act upon like Encouragement, as in Matters of inferior Concernment? It being a Case, in which any the least *Probability*, yea, a bare *Possibility* of Success is infinitely more valuable, than in any other Case imaginable; and a Case, where *Necessity* calls aloud for their most ardent Desires, their most incessant *Strivings to enter in at the strait Gate*, their utmost Pains in *pressing into the Kingdom of God*.----Was the *Man-slayer* under the Law sure of Success, and yet was he not wont to flee with all his Might to the City of Refuge? And should not the awakened Sinner, though without a Promise of certain Success, yet upon the Encouragement of a *Probability*, or even a meer *Possibility*, *flee for Refuge to lay Hold on the Hope set before Him*?-----Did not the *Ninevites* act meerly upon the Encouragement of a *Who can tell if God will return*!----And the *Israelites*, were they not stimulated by an uncertain Hope, saying, *Who knoweth if God will repent, and leave a Blessing behind him*!----Once more, when an inspired Apostle had an hypocritical Professor of the Gospel in Dealing, I mean *Simon*, whom he perceived to be in the Gall of Bitterness and Bond of Iniquity, with what Encouragement doth he enforce his Exhortation to him to *repent, and pray to God*? Doth he tell him of a *Promise*, and urge his Endeavours

as *Conditions*, in the Manner that you do ? No, Sir, but he puts all to the Risque ; he mentions but a *Peradventure*.----*Pray God, if perhaps He may forgive thee*.----This *Perhaps*, as here used, imports indeed only a Suspicion of the Truth of the Man's Repentance, and not any Doubt of God's Forgiveness in Case his Repentance were sincere.----Note, Sir, We have here a plain Scripture-Example of a Professor still *Unregenerate*, and under the Dominion and Guilt of Sin ; and of the Encouragement, which the Gospel gives to such an one, when awakened, to cry to God for Mercy. The Apostle only mentions a *Perhaps* ; and never lifts to him the most distant Surmise of a *Promise*, to secure certain Success. Now in this, will you say of an Inspired Apostle, that he took the ready Method to cut the Sinews of Simon's Endeavours to repent !----I hope surely, in this Case you will say No.-----What then is the *Divinity* you teach, in this Particular ! Is it not too near akin to that *vain Philosophy*, you so loudly exclaim against ? Or, is not the Language of your Objection in this Case, too agreeable to that of the *foolish Man*, who in Excuse of his Aversion to taking any Pains without Certainty of Success, says on every Occasion, *There is a Lion in the Way !*

But, Sir, however those on your Side of the Question may undervalue any Gospel-Encouragement, short of a *Promise* ascertaining the Success of a Sinner's Endeavours ; Yet we on the other hand are constrained, in the View of the glorious Encouragements of the Gospel (though from meer Sovereign Mercy, unpromised to any Endeavours of the Unregenerate) to admire the Wisdom of God in the Constitution of the *Covenant of Grace*, so adapted to the Design of exalting his own *Sovereignty*, and securing the Honours of his *Mercy* and *Holiness* together, and so adapted to promote at the same Time both the *Humiliation* and the *Encouragement* of the fallen Creature ! Equally calculated to awaken the Sinner's Fear of God's Wrath, and to support a Hope in his Mercy ; so, to guard him against the Dangers of Security, Presumption, and Delay, on the one hand, and on the other against all Temptations to Despair and Dejection.

Thus, Sir, I have finished what I proposed on this Occasion.----I am conscious of much Infirmary, and ask your Candour. I think, I can say uprightly, I have not committed any wilful Mistakes : but have wrote in the Fear of God, the very Sense of my Heart, according to my best Light.

On the whole, I would just make this one Remark, and be it remember'd : Though I deny any *Promise*, by virtue of which the

the *special Grace* of God can possibly become *due* to the Prayers and Endeavours of the Unregenerate, whilst such ; Yet however, I am perswaded, that it is the Duty of Sinners to be seeking and striving after it ; and that not a single Instance will be found of any Sinner in the Day of Judgment able to stand forth, and plead in Truth, *Lord, I did my best Endeavour to the very last, that I might obtain the Salvation which is by Jesus Christ, and looked diligently lest I should fail of the Grace of God, but after all was deny'd.*----- To be perswaded of this *Fact*, on the Score of the Riches of God's Mercy, and yet at the same Time to renounce all Pretence of a *Promise* to the Sinner's Endeavours, appear to me Things very well consistent. Though, guided by the Word, I limit the *Promises* of God to the Believer : Yet far be it from me, to entertain a Thought of limiting Him in his *unpromised Mercy* towards Sinners, which knows no other Bounds, in this, or any other Case, consistent with his moral Perfections, but the meer *good Pleasure of his Will*.

May the Spirit of Truth leads us into all Truth ; and may the Spirit of Grace make all Grace to abound towards us and in us !

'Tis the sincere Wish of,

Rev. Sir,

Your humble Servant,

Riptor,

April 22. 1747.

J. M.

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

Among other Mistakes, which are left to the Candour of intelligent Readers, these which follow are to be corrected thus.-----

Pag. 49. lin. 38. read *It's a good*----- P. 61. l. 14. r. *Gospel-Scheme of*---
P. 63. l. 2. *has the Truth*---- Ibid. l. 37. r. *is still*--- and l. 39. r. *seeming*---
P. 65. l. 5. r. *Creatures*

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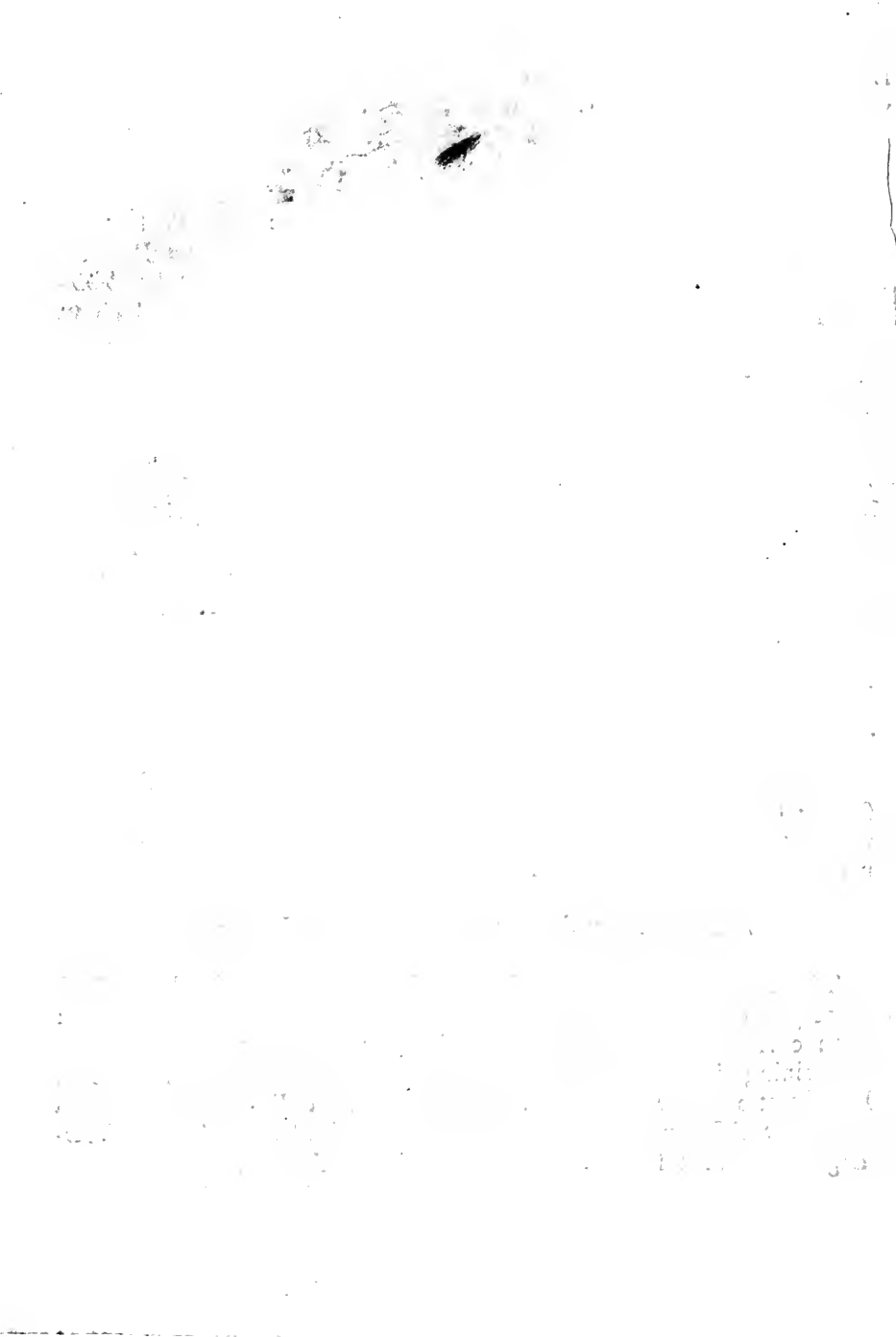
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1756
A

S E R M O N

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SYNOD of *NEW-YORK*,

CONVENED AT

NEWARK, in NEW-JERSEY,

September 30, 1756.

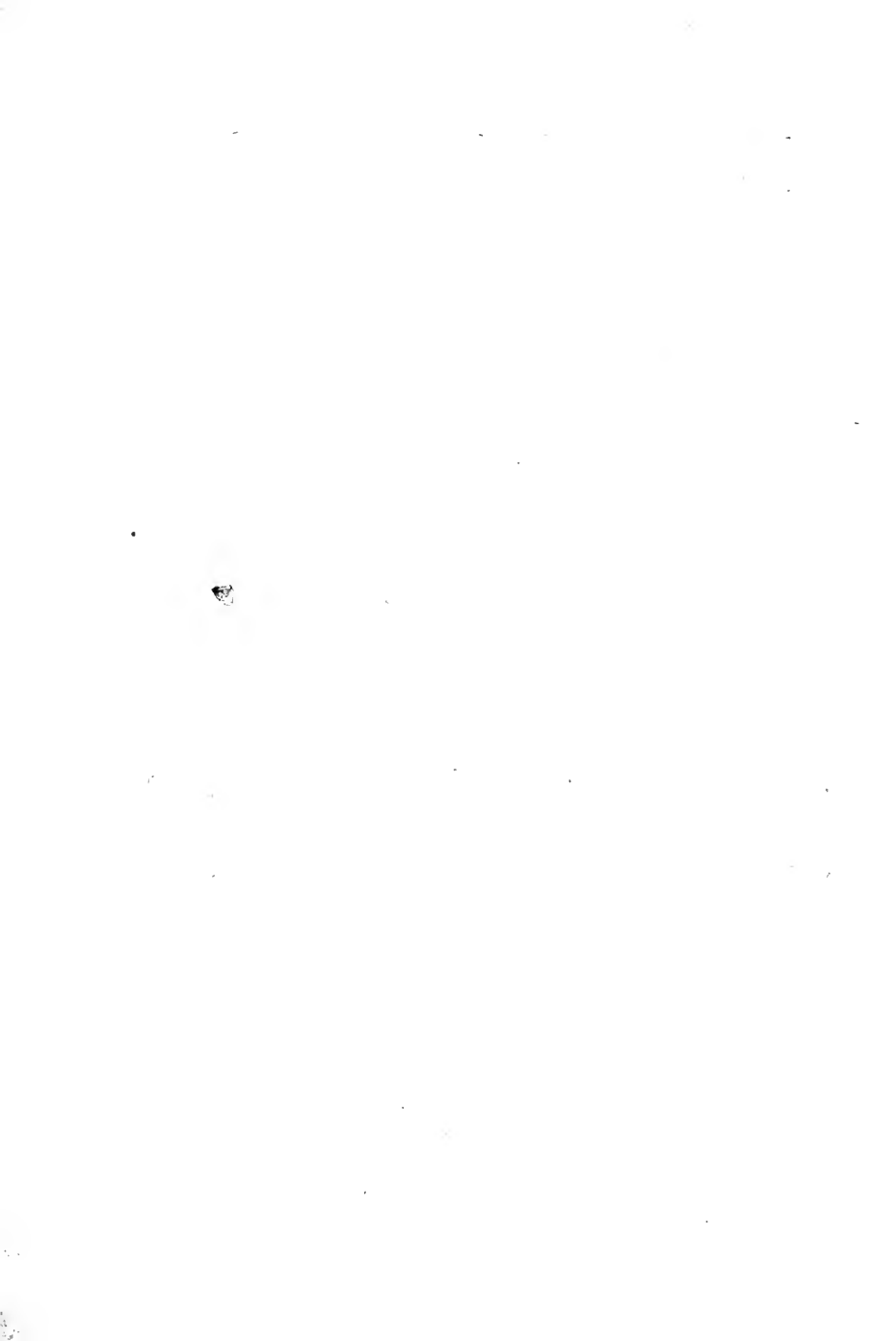
By AARON BURR, *A. M. President of the College
of NEW-JERSEY.*

Published by the DESIRE of the SYNOD.

ZECHA. xiv. 6, 7. And it shall come to pass, in that Day, that the Light shall not be clear, nor dark; but it shall be one Day which shall be known to the Lord; not Day, nor Night: But it shall come to pass, that at Evening Time, it shall be Light.

N E W - Y O R K :

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A

S E R M O N, &c.

ISAIAH xxi. 11, 12.

The Burden of DUMAH. He calleth to me out of SEIR, Watchman, What of the Night? Watchman, What of the Night? The Watchman said, The Morning cometh, and also the Night, if ye will enquire; enquire, ye; return; come.

IT may doubtless, at first View, appear strange to my Brethren, that I have chosen this *obscure Passage* of sacred Writ for your Entertainment; when it might be expected, that the *Dignity and Duties*; the *Comforts and Trials* of the ministerial Office should be explained, or the best Method of securing good Discipline and sound Doctrine in the Church, laid open. These Subjects, I confess, are highly proper to be insisted on, and should generally be the Topics of our Discourse, on such Occasions as these. But, some dark Apprehensions, as to the *Times* into which we are fallen, turned my Mind to this Subject: And as it will lead our Thoughts to the present *Dangers and Trials*; to the farther *Prospects and Hopes* relating to the Church of CHRIST, it will, I imagine, when properly explained and applied, be thought not unsuitable for those, who are assembled to consult its Welfare and Prosperity.

WHAT I shall attempt, is,

I. *To explain the Words, and illustrate the Prophecy, by such historical Events, as seem to point out the Fulfilment of it, in its primary View.*

A 2

II. *Apply*

II. *Apply it to the State of the Church in general, and to the Times into which we are fallen, in particular.*

THIS *enigmatical Prophecy*, seems in its primary View, to denote some further Calamity on the IDUMEANS, after the JEWS should be delivered from the *Darkness* they were then under; that while the *Morning* arose to the one, the *Night* should be continued to the other. It is called the *Burden* of DUMAH, because it brings sad and dark Tydings, what would prove an heavy Burden, hard to be born. DUMAH here, by a Contraction not unusual in the sacred Writings, seems evidently to be put for EDMOM; and so for the Country IDUMEA, where the EDMOMITES dwelt. This appears plain, by SEIR's being mentioned as the Place from whence the *Voice* came, which was that mountainous Part of IDUMEA, that lay next to the Land of CANAAN. The SEPTUAGINT therefore well translate it, *To' Horamates Idumaias*, i. e. the Vision of IDUMEA. In this *prophetic Scene*, there is one from that Country introduced, as addressing the Prophet in great Earnestness, about the State of the *Night*, or that *State* of Affliction and Oppression, which both the JEWS and IDUMEANS were under. *He calleth* (or there is one that calleth, or crieth) *to me out of SEIR*. The Word must be taken *collectively*, not denoting a particular Person, q. d. *there is a Cry*, or *the Voice of those that cry from that Country*; this appears from the Answer of the Prophet, *If ye will enquire, &c.* 'Tis observed that the original Word *Karab*, has an *Emphasis* in it, and denotes the Cry of Men in Anguish and Distress, impatiently waiting to see the End of their *Calamity*, and the *Dawn* of the Morning of their Deliverance. This shews a Beauty in the *scenical Representation*; as the Prophet is on the Watch-Tower among the JEWS, at a great Distance from *Mount Seir*, the Voice must be loud, in order to be heard. The Question follows, "*Watchman, What of the Night*, or from, or concerning the *Night*?" The Conjecture of COCCÆIUS, and some other *learned Commentators*, that the *Voice* is directed to GOD the Father, under the Character of a *Watchman*, because he is stiled the

the *Keeper of ISRAEL* ; or to the *SON*, who is represented as the *Shepherd of his People*, I think groundless. It is not supposable, that the *Idumeans* had any such distinct Notion of the *Father* or the *Son*, as to address *one* or the *other* by this Title.---To apply it to the *Prophet himself*, seems much more natural ; the Prophets being well known by the Character of *Watchmen*, as pointing out the *Design* and *Duties* of their Office : And thus they are frequently stiled in *sacred Writ*,* *I have set Watchmen on thy Walls, O JERUSALEM, " I have made thee,* says GOD to EZEKIEL, *a " Watchman to the House of ISRAEL."*† The Character is taken from those that are set to guard a City, or on a *Watch-Tower* to descry approaching Danger, and give the Signal : And they ought to be Men of *Courage*, that will not be frightened at the Shaking of a Leaf ; *faithful*, who will not betray their Trust ; *vigilant*, that will not suffer the Enemy to come by Surprise while they are asleep ; *quick sighted*, to spy the Danger ; *constant* and *unwearied* in their Attendance on the *Duties* of their Station ; and being continually awake, it might be expected could readily give the *Hour* of the *Night*. 'Tis easy to see how applicable this is, not only to the *Prophets*, but to all the *Ministers* of the Gospel, who are set as *Watchmen, on the Walls of God's Jerusalem* ; whose *Duty* and *Business* it is, to watch over the Heritage of the Lord ; to give seasonable, plain and faithful Warning to Saints and Sinners. The various remarkable *Dispensations* of God to his *Church*, were revealed to the *Prophets* ; they foretold the *desolating Judgments* that were brought not only on the *Jews*, but the neighbouring *Nations* ; knew something of the *Time*, *Manner* and *Duration* of the *dark Night* they had to pass through ; and so might properly be enquired of as to this Matter---*Watchman, What of the Night ?* What have you discovered as to the State of the *Night* ? How far is it advanced ? What remains ? Do you discern any Signs of the *Morning* ? Any Signs

* ISA I, lxii, 6.

† EZEK, iii, 17.

Signs that the present Scene of *Darkness* will soon be over? The Question is undoubtedly not about a *natural* but *metaphorical* Night,--that State of *Calamity* and *Distress* the *Jews* and *Idumeans* were under by the *Affyrians* or *Babylonians*; or, that *dark Dispensation* of the *Law*, the End of which was then expected, and earnestly desired. The *Repetition* of it, represents the *Panic* they were in; their *Distress*, or rather their *Impatience*, for an Answer.

It may perhaps seem strange at *first View*, that the *Idumeans* should make this Inquiry. What had they to do with the *Prophets* or the *divine Oracles*? Who were *Aliens* from the *Common-Wealth* of *Israel*, and *Strangers* from the *Covenant of Promise*.---But, the Difficulty will vanish, if we consider that the Scheme of this Prophecy is *emblematical* and *figurative*. The *Idumeans* are introduced here by the *Prophet*, as breathing after Deliverance under their *Calamities*, and making such anxious Inquiries as it is natural to suppose a People in their *Situation* would; and hearing that Deliverance was expected by the *Jewish Nation*, it was natural for them to desire to know the *Time* and *Manner* of it, in Hopes they also might Share in its Favour.---To this may be added---That the eastern Nations had a Veneration for the *Prophets of the God of Israel*, whose Fame was spread among them. And if we apply it to the then *dark State* of the *Church*, an Enquiry respecting a more glorious Dispensation, in which themselves, and all the *gentile World* were concerned, comes from them with singular Propriety. Some suppose the Question put by way of *Derision*, but I think without Foundation; had that been the Case, the *Prophet* would have given them a very different Answer. They seem to have a Degree of *Earnestness* about the Matter, and yet do not enquire with that *Faith*, and such *religious Views* as they ought. This is evident from the *Prophets* reply. *The Morning cometh, and also the Night, if ye will enquire; enquire, ye; return; come.* (i. e.) The *Morning* will be as dangerous as the *Night*, say some. Others translate it, the *Morning cometh*, and yet

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it is *Night*. i. e. Tho' there be a Deliverance from present Calamities, yet it will be but *partial*; *Light* comes, but *Darkness* will be intermixed with it; or according to our Translation, *The Morning cometh, but the Night will soon succeed*. It may mean, That tho' the *Morning* is coming to the *People of God*, it would still be *Night* with the *Idumeans*. 'Tis easy to see, that as *Night* is put for a State of *Affliction*, *Day* is a proper Emblem of *Joy* and *Comfort*. If ye will enquire; enquire, ye; return; come. The old *English* Translation under *Henry the VIIIth*, has it thus, "If ye will enquire indeed, and ask Questions in Earnest, enquire of God; first ask his Mercy, and then come again, and you shall have a more favourable Answer," which seems not far from the true Meaning.

As the Question, tho' not put with that Seriousness and Sincerity as it ought, implied a Desire to know the Purpose of God relating to their *present* dark and dismal Situation; the Answer seems to be to this Purpose, viz. Since you *Idumeans*, in your distressed Condition, seem to come to yourselves, express a Desire of returning to God, and knowing his *Will* concerning you, be in earnest in the Matter, enquire with Hearts suitably affected, with the *Dispensations* of divine Providence, with sincere Desires to know and comply with your Duty. Return to the God of *Israel*, come into the *Bosom* and *Communion* of the Church; since you are descended from *Abraham*, shew yourselves to be his *Children* indeed; come with *Sincerity* and *Faith*, to me and the other *Prophets*, to know the Mind and Will of God, and be suitably prepared to meet him, when he shall come forth against you. The Sum of what I have said is this: The *neighbouring Nations*, groaning under the same Oppression from the *Assyrian* and *Babylonish Princes*, as the *Jews* were, tho' the *peculiar People* of God, and favoured with his true *Prophets*; the *Idumeans* are introduced, enquiring after the *Duration*, and *End* of this common Calamity, in too careless a Manner, with too little Reverence or religious Sense of the Divine Dispensation. They have for Answer, That the *Morning* was coming, i. e. *Light* and
Liberty

Liberty to the Jews; but that the *Night* still awaited them; i. e. their present Afflictions and spiritual Darkneſs, would continue, while they maintain'd their *present Temper* of Mind towards God, and remained *Strangers to the Common-Wealth of Israel*. He therefore exhorts them to return to God, and enquire with a religious Diſpoſition, and right *Views* about this Matter.

THIS Interpretation may be illuſtrated by *hiſtorical Events*; either by refering it to the common Calamities that beſel the *Jews* and *Idumeans*, with other *neighbouring Nations*, under *Senacherib* King of *Aſſyria*; or to that which afterward beſel them under the Kings of *Babylon*. If to the *former*, the *Morning* that aroſe to the *Jews*, muſt be the *miraculous Deliverance* granted them, by the terrible Deſtruction of the *Aſſyrian Army* by an Angel.† The like Deliverance not being granted to the *Idumeans*, with them it remained *Night*. But, I rather ſuppoſe it may refer to the *Babylonish Captivity*, which involved the *Jews* and *Idumeans* in one common *Night* of Calamity and Diſtreſs, after which *long Night*, wherein the Church ſeemed as it were buried, a *glorious Morning* aroſe to the *Jews*, from the Deliverance granted by *Cyrus*; while the *Idumeans* continued in *Darkneſs*; as appears by *Malachi*, who lived after the Return of the *Jews* from the *Babylonish Captivity*; and deſcribes the *Idumeans* as impoveriſhed, unable to return and rebuild their waſte Places; being under the peculiar Diſpleaſure of Heaven.§ We come now,

II. To another *View* in which this *prophetic Deſcription* may be taken, and with *Propriety* applied to ſome remarkable *Periods* in the Church.

As the *Prophets* were ſet as *Watchmen*, on the *Walls* of *God's Jeruſalem*, to publiſh his Deſigns of Mercy and Judgment to the Church and the World; ſuch as were concerned to know the *Times* and *Seasons* of God's favouring his *Zion*, would naturally enquire at *their Mouths*, and as the *Idumeans* ſprang originally from the ſame Family with

† 2 Kings, xix. 35.

§ Mal. i. 1, 2, 3, 4.

with the *Jews*, and bordered upon them, they had doubtless some acquaintance with their *sacred Writings*. Some *Prophecies* had a particular Reference to them. It was foretold, that *Edom should be a Possession, and Seir a Possession of their Enemies* * It is natural therefore to suppose, that the more thoughtful among them, were looking for this Period, and being oppressed with Difficulties, were excited to enquire after the *Time* when they should be delivered from their *spiritual Darkeness*, and united to the *People of God*. This Prophecy of *Edom's being a Possession of their Enemies*, was in Part accomplished under the *Assmonean Family*, when the *Edomites* were subdued by the *Jews*, many of them brought to embrace their *Religion*, and their Country became their *Possession*. To this *Time*, the *Prophet* may have a View, when 'tis supposed they would not neglect the *sacred Writings*, but get some Acquaintance with those Prophecies, wherein *glorious Things* were spoken of *Zion*, when the present dark and gloomy Dispensation should be at an *end*, and the *Gentiles* partake of the *same Privileges* with the *Jews*. This must excite in all who had any due Esteem for *spiritual Blessings*, a Desire to be informed when the happy *Æra* would arrive. In this View, the *Question*, the *Answer* of the *Watchman*, his *Admonition*, to return and continue their Enquiries with more Seriousness and better Views, all appear *natural* and *proper*.

By the *Night*, we may understand the obscure Dispensation they were then under, which was ushered in with *Blackness, Darkeness, and a thick Tempest*. It is therefore called a *Ministration of Death, and Condemnation*, and proved so to the carnal *Jews*, who rested in the *Law* graven on *Stones*, not looking to him who was the *End* of it for *Righteousness* to all that believe.

THAT *Ministration* was indeed *glorious*, as it referred to, and pointed out the *Glories* of the *Gospel*; but how divinely glorious soever it was in itself, yet in Respect to the transcending

* Numb. xxiv, 18.

transcending Glory of that Dispensation of *Light* and *Grace*, which it shadowed forth, it might be said to have *no Glory*; the Lustre of it was swallowed up by the surpassing Glory of the *Gospel*, as the dim *Light* of the *Moon* and *twinkling Stars*, vanishes before the *rising Sun*. This Dispensation was not only *gloomy* and *dark*, when compared to the *superior Light* of the *Christian Revelation*, but was in a peculiar Manner so, by Reason of the *Blindness*, *Prejudices* and *Unbelief*, of those to whom it was given; which is fitly represented by the *Vail* *Moses* put on his Face while he delivered them the Law, to cover its *dazzling Brightness*, which they could not behold. This *Vail*, the Apostle expressly tells us, was on their *Hearts**, so that they could not look to the End of that which was to be abolished. They were as unable to behold the *Mind* of *Moses* in that *Economy*, as they were his *Face*; when he turned to the Lord he took off the *Vail*; which implies, that that Dispensation, as it came from God, and was revealed to him, was full of *Grace*, and shone with a divine Lustre; but when he conversed with the People he had it on, for the internal Glories of his Ministration which were delivered in *Types* and *Figures of good Things to come*, were rendered obscure and dark, by the *Blindness* and *Prejudices* of their carnal Hearts. When they shall turn to the Lord, at the *blessed Period* of their general Conversion, this *Vail* shall be taken away, and they shall clearly see how the *glorious Grace* of the *Gospel* was revealed under all the *Types* and *Shadows* of the *Law*. But, by Reason of the *Darkness* of their Minds, and the *obscure Manner* in which Christ, and the Blessings of his Kingdom, were then typified, the Church continued in a dark and benighted State. There was indeed a Mixture of *Light* with that *Darkness*; the *Prophets* were like so many *shining Stars* in the Church, and they had many *sure Words of Prophecy*, to which they might give *Heed*; but it was only as to a *Light shining in a dark Place*, till the *Day-star* appeared, and the *glorious Sun of Righteousness* arose. AND

* 2 Cor. iii. 13, 14.

AND 'tis worthy Observation, that the *Night* was peculiarly *gloomy*, towards the Close of this Dispensation, when the Darkneſs was much increaſed, by almoſt continual *Perſecutions* and *Oppreſſions*, from the *Kings* of *Syria* without; while the *internal Glories* of it were greatly obſcured, and almoſt wholly loſt, by thoſe dangerous *Corruptions* in *Doctrin*e, *Discipline* and *Worſhip*, which then over-ſpread the *Jewiſh Church*, and thoſe ſcandalous *Diviſions* into which it fell.

It was alſo eminently *Night*, with the *gentile World*, who being ſunk into deplorable Darkneſs, were given up to the moſt abominable *Idolatry* and vile *Affections*. But as an Expectation of the Coming of the *Meſſiah*, the promiſed Deliverer, began now to prevail and become general, 'tis not ſtrange, that ſome among the *Gentiles*, as well as the *Jews*, are repreſented, crying to the *Watchman*, *What of the Night?* When will the *Darkneſs* of the preſent Dispensation be over, and a *Deliverer* come out of *Zion*, to turn away *Iniquity* from *Jacob*? When will thoſe *Times* of Ignorance which God has hitherto winked at in the *gentile World*, be at an End, and *Light* ariſe to thoſe that now ſit in the *Region of the Shadow of Death*? How much of this dark *Season* is paſt? What yet remains? When will the *Day* break by the Appearance of that *glorious Perſon*, who is to be a *Light* to the *Gentiles*, and a *Glory* to God's *People* *Israel*? It might be ſuppoſed, that the *Watchmen* who were enquiring and ſearching diligently, what *Manner of Time* the *Spirit* in them did ſignify, when it teſtified before *Hand*, the *Sufferings* of *Chriſt*, and the *Glory* that ſhould follow, could give an Answer to ſuch a *Queſtion*, as the *Time* and *Manner* of his Appearance were ſo clearly pointed out. They might ſee, that the *Scepter* was about to depart from *Judah*, according to *Jacob's Propheſy* *. That *Daniel's 70 Weeks*, or 490 Years, were near expiring: And as it muſt be during the Standing of the *ſecond Temple*, to which he was ſuddenly to come, and fill with his *Glory*, according to *Malachi* ||, it could not be long delayed. By

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* GEN. xlix, 10.

|| MALACHI. iii, 1.

these Hints, the *Watchmen* might know the *Night was far spent*, and answer as in the Text, *The Morning cometh*, the long expected Day is at Hand. In this View of the Words, the *Watchman's* Answer, that *the Morning cometh*, may point out the *Light* and *Joy* brought to the World by the Appearance of the *Son of God*. The Day began to dawn under the Ministry of *John the Baptist*. He was indeed a *burning and a shining Light*, compared with the other *Prophets*; but was not the *true Light*, tho' like the Morning Star he ushered in the Day. But, when the *Sun of Righteousness*, arose with *Healing under his Wings*, he diffused *Light*, *Life*, and *Joy*, thro' a dark, dead, and cheerless World. The Shadows of the former Dispensation, and the thick Clouds of *heathenish Ignorance* and *Superstition*, fled before him, as the Darkness of the Night before the rising Sun. It was prophesied of him, that his *going forth, should be prepared as the Morning*.* As the natural Sun in the Morning spreads *Joy* and *Gladness*, thro' the wide Creation, so did CHRIST thro' a lost and ruined World. The Angel brings the News of his Birth, as *Tidings of great Joy to all People*. The Gospel preached in his Name, was a ravishing Sound to all that heard and received it: Like the Morning Light, it spread far and wide; grew brighter and brighter, towards a *perfect Day*. It had *free Course*, and was *glorified*; triumphing over all the Opposition of *Earth* and *Hell*.

WITH what divine Lustre and Beauty did the *Church* shine, in this *Morning* of her Days, when the pure *Doctrines* of the *Gospel*, were taught without that corrupt Mixture, which the *Pride* and *Ignorance* of Men have since introduced. She was as a *City set on a Hill*, and Multitudes both *Jews* and *Gentiles* rejoiced in her Light. She seemed to answer the Description given of her, by St. JOHN, in his prophetic Vision; § where she is represented, as *clothed with the Sun*, having the *Moon under her Feet*, and a *Crown of 12 Stars on her Head*; a beautiful Image, expressing, in a lively Manner, the *Glory*, *Honour*, and *Dignity* of the *Church*.

* HOSEA vi, 3. LUKE ii, 11. § REV. xii, 1.

Church. There appeared in her Members, in this *early Age*, such genuine *Piety*, and fervent *Devotion*; such lively *Hope*, and strong *Faith*; such warm and unfeigned *Love* to one another; such *Meekness*, and undissembled *Humility*; such *Heavenly-mindedness* and *Deadness* to the World; such universal *Holiness*, and *Purity* of Life; as made them *shine like Lights in the World*. Religion then appeared *amiable* and *alluring*, as exemplified in the Lives of Professors; which tended greatly to the propagating the Gospel. The Brightness of this Morning was soon obscured. Many Errors of pernicious Influence crept into the *Church*, even while under the Conduct of inspired Men: But after the *Apostles* Decease, *Men of corrupt Minds*, began with more Freedom, to propagate their dangerous Doctrines, and licentious Practices, *bringing swift Destruction on themselves*, and their Followers. Towards the Close of the *first*, and during the *second*, and *third Centuries*, the *Church* was greatly infested with Persons, who advanced the most absurd and dangerous Opinions, tending to the Destruction of all *natural* and *revealed* Religion; -- the *Nicolaitans*, various Sects of the *Gnostics*, *Corinthians*, *Valentinians*, *Marcionites*, and *Manicheans*, with a Train of other *Heretics*, who appeared in the *early Ages* of the *Church*; venting many impious Notions about *God* and *Christ*; *the Origin of Good and Evil*; *the sacred Writings*; and *the Way of Salvation by Christ*; to the great Reproach and Hindrance of the Gospel. -- Some making *God* the *Author* of Sin; others denying the *Unity* of the *Godhead*; some the *Divinity*, and many the *Humanity* of *CHRIST*; while others even blasphemously pretended to be the *Saviour* of the World themselves. What added to the Scandal of their Errors, the vilest *Debaucheries*, -- the most abominable *Crimes* were countenanced and practised, under the *Cloak* of Religion; which the *Enemies* of Christianity, were malicious enough to impute, however unjustly, to all its Professors. While the *Church* was thus darkened, corrupted, and exceedingly scandalised by *Heresies within*; she was almost continually harrassed with violent Oppressions and cruel Persecutions, under the

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beaten Emperors from without; which continued with but little Intervals of *Peace* and *Rest*, during the three first Centuries. Tho' there was, in those *early Ages* of Christianity, much spiritual Light, and plentiful Communications of Divine Grace; yet during the ten *general Persecutions*, which so quickly succeeded one another, it might well be called *Night*; when compared to that State of *external Peace* and *Prosperity*, which the Church shall enjoy in the *latter Days*, &c. with Respect to the glorious Diffusion of *Gospel Light*, which may then be expected.

AT the Close of the *third*, and Beginning of the *fourth Century*, the Church was reduced to the last *Extremity*, by a Number of cruel Persecutors, who seemed to combine together, for the utter Destruction of the Christian Name and Cause. *Galerius*, *Diocletian*, *Maximin*, and *Maxentius*, acted as if they vied with one another, in the unheard of *Cruelties*, and monstrous *Barbarities*, exercised towards the *innocent Disciples* of CHRIST: But the Churches *Extremity*, is God's *Opportunity*; He begins to make *bare his Arm*; visibly to espouse the Cause of his distressed People; and to recompence Vengeance to those that afflicted them. *Galerius*, being seized with an incurable and intolerable Disease, expires in the Midst of most bitter Anguish and Torment. *Diocletian*, forced to resign his Authority, oppressed with a Load of Guilt, groans and sighs away his miserable Life. *Maximin*, after being defeated by *Licinius*, attempts to put an End to his own Life; but dies a lingering Death, amidst the most amazing Torments, acknowledging his Guilt, in having persecuted the *Christians*. In this *dark Period*, God also raises up that great *Deliverer* and *Defender* of his Church, *Constantine*; who, *A. D.* 312, gains a compleat Victory over that cruel *Tyrant* and grand *Persecutor*, *Maxentius*; which gave rest to the Church in the *West*: And the Death of *Licinius*, which happened soon after, who was first a *Favourer*, but afterwards a cruel *Persecutor* of the *Christians*, seemed to put an End to all their Troubles: They enjoyed free Liberty every where.---
Constantine ascribes the Glory of all his Victories, to the
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God and Father of our Lord, JESUS CHRIST. And as a Token of Gratitude, gives public Countenance to the *Christian Religion*; secures it by *Edicts* and *Laws*; erects *Schools*; builds and endows *Churches*; bestows many *Immunities* and *Privileges* on the *Clergy*, and distinguishes them with many public *Marks* of Honour and Respect. Thus the *Darkness* which had overspread the *Church*, began to scatter, and the *Morning* to appear. The *Gospel* had free Course and was glorified; there was opened an *effectual Door*, which no Man was allowed to shut. A delightful Scene seemed now to open on the *Church*, and looked like the Beginning of a bright and glorious *Day*. Many had raised Expectations, that the happy Period was now come, when the *Kingdoms of this World, would become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and his Christ*: But alas! how different did the Event prove. This *Morning* was soon overcast, and succeeded by a dark and dismal *Night*. The Honours, Dignities and Riches conferred on the *Clergy*, and the *Church*, introduced *Luxury*, *Pride* and *Ignorance*, with a long Train of dangerous Consequences. About this Time, the *Arian Heresy* sprung up, and spreading itself over a great Part of the *Christian Church*, proved destructive to the *Faith* once delivered to the *Saints*; threw the *Church* into great Confusions, and produced very sore Persecutions: The *Emperors* favouring sometimes the *Arian*, and sometimes the *orthodox* Party; which brought infinite Scandal on the *Christian Name*, and caused the *Enemy* to blaspheme.

Soon after Christianity had spread over a great Part of the *Roman Empire*, under Protection of the Government; the most terrible Desolation, was brought on the *Western Empire*, by the northern barbarous Nations, viz. the *Goths*, *Vandals*, *Almains*, *Sarmatians*, *Picts* and *Scots*; who seemed to conspire together for its utter Ruin, and for a long Time continued wasting, burning, and destroying all before them. About *A. D. 410*, *Alaricus* the *Goth*, sacked and plundered *Rome*; about Fifty-five Years after which, it was again plundered, and burnt by *Genfericus*,
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the *Vandal*. Soon after, it met with the same Fate from *Richomerus* 472; twice by *Totila*; and again by *Attila*, King of the *Huns*, who was above all the Rest, a sore *Scourge*, in the Hand of Providence, to the degenerate Christians of that Day.

WHILE the *Empire* was in this dreadful Confusion, by those *barbarous Nations*, gross Ignorance began to overspread the *Christian World*; for, by the Ravages they committed, *Schools* were dissipated, *Ministers* banished, and *Learning* buried. Those who were then on the *Stage*, being soon wasted with the *Sword* and *Age*; the rising Generation grew up in lamentable Ignorance. The most indeed of the Rulers of those *barbarous Nations* embraced Christianity; but being very Ignorant, became an easy Prey to the *Pride* and *Policy* of the corrupt and degenerate *Clergy* of the Day. This Opportunity the *Bishop of Rome* improved, to set himself up as the *Head of the Church*; the *Successor* of ST. PETER; CHRIST'S *Vicar on Earth*; and found it but too easy a Matter to impose on those weak *Princes*, and an ignorant *People*, and thus to introduce those gross *Corruptions*, *Superstitions*, and false *Doctrines*, which have since proved so fatal to the Church. Thus *Antichrist* began to be revealed, and gradually grew up to that *Height* of Wickedness, which he afterwards discovered; *exalting himself above all that is called God*. The Darkness of this *Night*, brought on the Church, by Ignorance, Superstition, and the abominable Corruptions of *Popery*, were greatly increased by the *Rise* of that false Prophet and grand Impostor *Mahomet*, who made his Appearance, *A. D.* 606; and notwithstanding the People of *Mecca*, attempted to crush the *Impostore* in the Bud, yet, *A. D.* 615, it began to spread; for having by an apostate *Jew*, and *Nestorian Monk*, composed his *Alcoran*, and deluded his Followers, with a Notion of his being raised up by God, to institute a new Religion; he teaches them, that it is to be propagated by the *Sword*, and that it is meritorious to die for it.--- By this Means, he soon brought all *Arabia* into his Power; and his Followers (who, from their pretended Descent from

from *Sarah*, *Abraham's* Wife, were called *Saracens*) soon over-run the greatest Part of *Asia*, and began to spread themselves exceeding fast in *Europe*, till their memorable Defeat by *Charles Martel*, A. D. 734.

THE Miseries brought on the Christian Church; by the Spread of this Impostore, were exceeding great. The glorious Light of the Gospel, which began to be obscured, with the *Errors* and *Corruptions* of the Church of *Rome*, seemed as if it would have been wholly extinguished. By *this* they brought such Ignorance and Error, Deceit, Violence and Slavery, where ever they came, that it seemed as if the bottomless Pit had been opened, and *Satan* at the Head of the Powers of Darkeness, come forth, according to the prophetic Description of the Rise of this Impostore, Rev. ix. 2. *And he opened the bottomless Pit, and there arose a Smoke out of the Pit, as the Smoke of a great Furnace, and the Sun and Air were darkened by Reason of the Smoke of the Pit, and out of the Smoke Locusts came*, which fitly enough describes the Miserie and Woe, stupid Ignorance and Superstition, which every where attended the Progress of the *Mahometan Religion*. The coming up of the *Locusts*, and Destruction they make where ever they go, *emphatically represents* the amazing and destructive Progress of the *Saracens*.

THIS dark and dismal Night, brought on the Church by the Rise of *Popery*, on the one Hand, and the *Mahometan Impostore* on the other, continued for a long Time with but a little glimmering of Gospel Light, among a few that kept the Faith: Religion and Learning seemed likely to be banished from the World. But at the Close of the 15th, and Beginning of the 16th Centuries, the Day began to dawn, by a glorious *Reformation*, which had been attempted, and struggled for, by *Wickliff*, in *England*; the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*, in *France*; and *John Huss*, in *Germany*, long before: But was now carried on by *Luther*, under the Protection of the *Eleſtor* of *Saxony*, with surprizing Success, in many Parts of *Germany*; who was joined by *Melancton*, and other noble *Reformers*;
whilst

whilst *Calvin*, at *Geneva*, *Zwinglius* and *Farellus*, with a Train of faithful Witnesses for the Truth, who appeared about this Time, were strenuously supporting, and vigorously carrying on, (tho' with some small Difference, in lesser Matters) the same glorious Cause. The Light of the Gospel seemed for a Season to shine brighter and brighter, spread far and wide in Spite of all the Methods the *Popish Party* made use of, by *Bulls*, *Decrees of Councils*, and the most unheard of *Cruelties*, to stop and suppress it. The *Pope's* Authority began very fast to decline. The Nations of *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland*, the northern Kingdoms of *Denmark* and *Sweden*, with great Numbers in *France*, *Hungary* and *Bohemia*, all received the *Reformation*, and disclaimed any Subjection to the *Kingdom of the Beast*.

THESE Things appeared like the Beginning of a joyful Day, and many were ready to think, the glorious Things spoken of *Zion*, in the *latter Days*, were now at Hand. There appeared in many of the first *Reformers*, such a Love to the Truth, and Zeal for practical Godliness, as gave a fair Prospect of a thorough *Reformation*; from all the Corruptions in *Doctrine*, *Discipline* and *Worship*, which had crept into the *Church*: But the Event fell far short of the raised Hopes of *Zion's* Friends. In many Places it was carried on chiefly by the civil Magistrate, who went no farther than to answer their *political Schemes*, and in most it was too much a *formal, nominal* Thing, conducted by the *Wisdom* of this *World*. So that it soon came to a Stand, and has been for many Years past on the Decline, as to the Principles and Practice of *real Religion*, and this sad Declension is growing fast on the present Generation.

SOME may be ready perhaps by this Time, to put to Me the Question in the Text, *Watchman, what of the Night?* Whereabouts are We? Is it *Night*, or *Day*? What are the Signs of the *Times*, in which we are fallen? What may we look for? To which I answer, I am very far from pretending to a Spirit of Prophecy, or any such Insight into the prophetic Writings, as precisely to fix the

the Dates of those *Times* and *Seasons*, about which learned and pious Men have so widely differed ; I may venture however, to affirm, some Things that appear *evident* and *plain*, and modestly offer my Thoughts about others, more *doubtful* and *uncertain*.

It is, I think, very evident, that the *Night* brought on the Church, by the Delusions and Superstition of *Mahomet*, and the *Pope*, still continues. Notwithstanding the frequent Appearances of the *Morning*, the *Darkness* still remains, and at present seems to increase. *Popery* did indeed receive a great Wound at the *Reformation*, and the *Pope* considered as a temporal Prince, has, as to his *secular Power*, been ever since, very much on the Decline, very little Regard being paid him to what formerly was ; but this in many, arises more from Contempt of the *Gospel*, and all *revealed Religion*, than a Dislike to the Corruptions of *Popery*, or Regard to the Truth ; and however, he be declined in secular Power, the *Popish Religion*, still greatly prevails. The greatest Part of *Christendom* are *professedly* of that Communion, and *acknowledge* Subjection to the *Pope*, as their spiritual Head ; and the corrupt Doctrines of *that Church*, have of late Years very much prevailed in Protestant Countries.

THE *Turks*, who, when they defeated the *Saracens*, adopted their *Religion* and *Manners*, which they have ever since been propagating, by their victorious Arms, (tho' they have been something weakened by their late Wars with the *Germans*) are yet in Possession of a considerable Part of *Asia*, *Europe*, and *Africa*, where the Christian Religion formerly flourished. The *Mahometans* have ever been professed Enemies to Christianity, and endeavour to root it out wherever they come, and are at present, the greatest *Obstacle* in the Way of spreading the *Gospel*. And how great a Part of the World is yet involved in *heathenish Darkness* and *Idolatry* ? When with these Things, we consider the sad Declensions, Corruptions and Divisions of the *Reformed Churches*, we are constrained to pronounce it

C

Night.

Night. The Light of the Gospel does indeed shine, but 'tis like twinkling Stars in the Midst of *Darkness*, and *Error*.

SHOULD it now be enquired, What of this *Night*? How far is it advanced? And how much is yet to come? I answer, it appears to me, that we are in the *Close* of this dark *Night*, and that the *Morning* cometh. Could we determine when this *Night* began, it would be easy to fix on the Time of it's *End*; the *Duration* of it being plainly pointed out in prophetic Writings. The *Beast* to whom the *Dragon* (the *Roman Emperor*) gave his *Seat*, *Authority*, and *Power*, was to continue *speaking great Things and Blasphemies*, 42 Months, REV. xiii. 2 and 5; which is just equal to the *Time*, *Times*, and *half Time*; while the *Woman*, i. e. the *Church* is drove into the *Wilderness*, and there nourished, REV. xii. 14. During this *Period*, the *Witnesses* are to *Prophecy in Sackcloth*, or the faithful Messengers of CHRIST, are to Labour under Discouragements and Opposition, which was to continue 1260 Days, REV. xi. 3. These several Numbers in prophetic Stile, taking a *Day* for a *Year*, make the same *Period* 1260 Years. So long the persecuting Power of the *Beast* will continue; and while it does, the *Church* will be in a *wilderness State*, and the faithful Ministers of CHRIST will *Prophecy in Sackcloth*, This persecuted, oppressed, benighted State of the *Church*, will be succeeded by those glorious Times, when *Satan* will be confined to the *bottomless Pit*, that he may no longer deceive the Nations, and when there shall be nothing to offend in all God's holy Mount. But when this dark State of the *Church* shall End, or where to fix it's Beginning, is a Matter of Uncertainty, as it seems to have come gradually on. ST. PAUL, indeed tell us, That the wicked one, whose coming was to be after the Workings of Satan, with all Power, Signs, and lying Wonders should be revealed, when he that then let or hindered, was taken out of the Way. By him, that Let, the ancient, as well as modern Expositors, understand, the *Roman Emperor*, who, as long as he held his *Seat* and *Power*, prevented the *Pope* of *Rome* from deceiving the Nations, with his lying Wonders. The ancient
Christians

Christians, therefore used to pray for the Continuance of the *Roman Empire*, that the coming of *Antichrist* might be delayed. If the Downfal of the *Roman Empire*, may be reckoned from *Rome's* being sacked, and taken by the Irruptions of the *Northern Nations*, when almost the whole *Empire*, was over run and divided among them; when the *ten Horns*, or Kingdoms arose, and gave their Power and Strength to the *Beast*; || the Destruction of *Antichrist*, and the End of this *Night* of *Popish* Darkness, is near at Hand; *when he shall be destroyed, by the Breath of CHRIST's Mouth, and the Brightness of his Coming*. But, tho' this *Night* is evidently far spent, and the *Day* draws nigh, yet it appears to me not improbable, that the darkest Part of the *Night* yet remains, and that the *glorious Times*, the Church will enjoy in the *latter Day*, will be preceded with a Season of the sorest Calamity and Distress. It is the Opinion of many learned Divines, that there will be a general Slaughter of the *Witnesses*, who have thro' all the dark Ages of *Popery*, born a faithful Testimony to the *Truth* and *Ways of Christ*, a little before the *seventh Angel* sounds his Trumpet, for the utter Destruction of *Antichrist's* Kingdom, just when they are about finishing their Testimony, and consequently that this Event is future. But as some eminent Divines, and *One*, for whose Judgment I have the highest Veneration, are of a different Opinion, and think it is already past, I shall offer what I have to say on this Head, with all *Humility*, and much *Diffidence* of my own Sentiments, about so dark an Event: The Account we have of it is, *Rev. xi. 7---13. And when they shall have finished their Testimony, the Beast that ascends out of the bottomless Pit, shall make War against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them; and their dead Bodies shall lie in the Street of the great City, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the People, and Kindreds and Tongues, and Nations, shall see their dead Bodies three Days and an Half, and shall not suffer their dead Bodies to*

to be put in Graves. And they that dwell upon the Earth, shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send Gifts one to another; because these two Prophets tormented them that dwell on the Earth. And after three Days and an Half, the Spirit of Life from God entered into them: And they stood upon their Feet, and great Fear fell upon them, which saw them. And they heard a great Voice from Heaven, saying unto them, "Come up hither": And they ascended up to Heaven in a Cloud, and their Enemies beheld them.

THE Sum of which Passage seems to be this, viz. That when these faithful Witnesses who have so long prophesied in Sackcloth, are about concluding their Testimony, there will be a severe Persecution raised by the *antichristian* Party; whereby all the faithful Ministers of the Gospel, will appear to be silenced or slain, and that in the most public, open, and ignominious Manner, so that their Enemies shall triumph as tho' the Day were their own; but this will continue only for a short Time, *three Days and an Half*; which, if it does not mean *three Years and an Half*, taking according to prophetic Stile, a Day for a Year; yet it doubtless means, that this Time of their Suffering will be but short, compared to the Time of their prophesying in Sackcloth; it will be but as a Day to a Year, as that is a Time, Times and half a Time, 1260 Years. After this they shall not only be restored to their former Liberty, but exalted to such a State of Dignity and Security, as they never before enjoyed, and that in the Presence, and to the Confusion of their Enemies; and the Reasons which have made it appear to me not improbable that the Church has this distressing Scene yet to pass thro', are such as these:

1st, It is to be at the Conclusion of their prophesying in Sackcloth, when they have just finished their Testimony. When they shall have finished their Testimony. Thus we translate it, which indeed seems the most natural, genuine Construction of *botan telestasi, cum perfecerint*, when they have about compleated or finished off their Testimony, as the original Word properly signifies; at the Close of 1260 Days, when the Period of *Antichrist's* Reign will

will be just at an End. But, as yet, this Period evidently continues, the faithful Ministers of Christ may, on many Accounts, be said, still to *prophecy* in *Sackcloth*, as the *Mahometan* and *Antichristian* Darknes yet remains, and they are carrying on their Work under great Discouragements.

2d, HISTORY affords no past Events to which the *slaying* and *Resurrection* of the Witnesses, can well be applied. Some learned Men have, I know, endeavoured to find the Accomplishment of it, in sundry *Persecutions*, bro't on the faithful Witnesses for the Truth, none of which seem fully to answer the *prophetic* Description given of that Event. The *Waldenses* (Followers of *Peter Waldo*, a Merchant of *Lyons*, in *France*) A. D. 1160, were persecuted with great Severity: 'Tis computed, that not less than 80,000 sealed their Testimony to the *Truths of God*, with their Blood. Above a Million of the *Albigenses* (so called from their native Country in *Languedoc*) fell a Sacrifice in the same glorious Cause; but these were of too early a Date to answer the Description; of too long Continuance, and confined to a particular Country; whereas the *slaying of the Witnesses* will be a general Thing; and it is worthy of Remark, that this was in a Country where the Witnesses have, almost ever since, prophesied in *Sackcloth*, as all acquainted with the *History of France*, well know. If they were slain in that Place, it is hard to say, when they rose, or were exalted. Much less can we find this Event accomplished, in the short Persecutions by *Queen MARY*, in *England*, or under the *Duke of Savoy*, in *Piedmont*, which were confined to so small a Part of the Church, however exactly they may seem to answer as to Duration. Many severe Persecutions have been carried on by the *Papists*, against the *Protestants*, in *Hungary*, *Bobemia*, many Parts of *Germany*, and repeatedly in *France*; but all these were only partial *slaying of the Witnesses*. They were never so universally cut off, as the Prophecy seems to represent.

3d, IT would be difficult to shew, that there ever has been that *Resurrection*, and glorious *Exaltation* of the Witnesses, which is to follow immediately after their *lying dead three Days and an Half*. What like this has happened upon any of the Persecutions that have yet been on the protestant Churches? They are not only to be restored to *Life*, but to *ascend up into Heaven*, i. e. to be exalted to an higher State of *Dignity* and *Power*, than they have ever yet enjoyed; and this is to be in a public, open Manner, in the Presence, and to the Confusion of their Enemies. They are to put off their *Sackcloth*, and put it on no more. The Reproach of their former suffering State, will be wiped away: But the faithful Witnesses of Christ don't seem ever yet to have enjoyed any such State of *Honour*, *Power*, *Influence* and *Security*, as is here represented. Something indeed, like this, seemed to have happened at the *Reformation*, when many of the first *Reformers* were protected and encouraged in their Work, against the Attempts of their *Popish* Adversaries; but when we consider the Opposition they met with, the frequent Persecutions in many Parts of the *Protestant Countries*, the great Discouragements one Way or another, under which the faithful Witnesses of Christ have laboured; we cannot but conclude, that the Time of their *prophecying in Sackcloth yet continues*.

4th, THE *second Woe*, does not appear yet to have passed away, nor any such Destruction and Consternation to be brought on the *Seat* of the *Beast*, as is to be at the same Time with the *Slaughter* and *Resurrection* of the *Witnesses*.

IF the *second Woe*, or *Plague* of the Sixth Trumpet, was brought on the Church, by the pouring out of the *fifth Vial*, when a *Way* was prepared for the *Kings of the East*; or, the *Turks* suffered to over-run a considerable Part of *Europe*; or, if it be referred to the Destruction and Darkeness brought on many Parts of Christendom, by the *Saracens*; I say, to which soever of these *Events* it is referred, 'tis evident, this *Woe* brought by the *Mahometan Imposture*, is not yet passed away, great Part of the World still groaning under it; and it is probable, this *Woe* is to end with the

the total Destruction and Abolition of the *Turkish Empire*. Neither does there appear to have been any such *Destruction* and *Revolution* in the *Antichristian* Dominions, as is represented by the *great Earthquake*; the Destruction of the *Tenth Part of the City*, and *Slaughter of 7000 Men of Name*; especially the Time never has yet been, when the Reit were *affrighted*, and gave *Glory to God*. They have been grieved, vexed and tormented, at the Progress of the *Reformation*, the Liberty granted to the faithful Witnesses; but so far have they been from *repenting*, and giving *Glory to God*, that, on the Contrary, they have been continually venting their Spite and Malice against the *Reformed Churches*, and labouring, by all their hellish Arts, and *popish Rage*, to ruin and destroy them.

5th, It has been God's usual Method to prepare his Church and People for *extraordinary Favours*, by *extraordinary Trials*, and in the present corrupt State of Things, it seems highly proper that it should be so.

THE Affairs of *Jacob's Family*, are in the most distressed Situation, before he hears that *Joseph* was yet alive, and that by him a Door was open for their Relief. The Children of *Israel* were reduced to the last Extremity, in their *Egyptian Bondage*, just before their remarkable Deliverance. When was *David* in a greater Strait than at the Burning of *Ziklag*, a little before he was exalted to the Throne of *Israel*? The Persecution of the Church under the *Emperors of Rome*, was by far the most *extreme* and *dangerous* under *Dioclesian*, when her Deliverance drew nigh, and she was ready to be exalted under *Constantine*. The Experience of many Christians can testify, that those *Seasons* in which they have been most highly favoured, with special Communications of *Light* and *Love*, have been preceded by remarkable *Darkness* and *Perplexity*. That he should therefore prepare his Church, for those *glorious Things* spoken of it in the latter Days, by some *extraordinary Trials*, is no improbable Supposition. This Observation will be much strengthened, by considering the present degenerate State of the *protestant Churches*, which is such, that it can hardly be expected

pected God should pass by, without some *special Tokens* of his Displeasure.

AND if the *Slaying of the Witnesses* is not yet past, it is probable it may be near at Hand. But however it may be as to that particular *Event*, † about which I would be far from making any positive Conclusions, many Things may make us expect that *difficult* and *trying* Times are coming on the *Church* and the *World*. The dark Cloud that gathers so fast over our *Nation* and *Land*, seems to forebode Distress and Calamity, to the *protestant Churches* in general. The *British Nation* has been for a long Time the great *Bulwark* of the *Reformation*, and should it be subdued, the other *Protestant Powers in Europe* could, by no Means, be a Match for their *anticristian Enemies*, when united together ; and a Door would open for a distressing Scene of Persecution, throughout all the *reformed Churches*. It gives me no Pleasure to be a Messenger of evil Tidings, nor would I make positive Assertions about *future Events* ; yet I must say, our publick Affairs wear a dark Aspect. The Nation we are engaged with in War, is numerous, powerful and politic. *France* abounds with Men, and the *King* commands as many as he pleases into the Field ; on every Occasion shows himself superior to our Expectations ; and his being an absolute Monarch gives great Advantage in Point of Secrecy and Dispatch.

OUR old Friend and Ally, the *Queen of Hungary*, has joined the *King of France*, and so far as we can judge from her Conduct, designs to forsake us, whatever plausible Pretences,

† The Reasons for supposing this Event already past, are set in a strong, and clear Light, in that excellent Treatise, *An humble Attempt to promote extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion* ; which I had not by me when I wrote this Discourse, but on a Review of it since, find that such a Season of Trials, as I suppose the present degenerate State of the Church requires, may be expected on the Author's Scheme that the Witnesses are slain ; for he says, Page 125, " 'Tis true there is abundant Evidence in Scripture. that there is yet
 " remaining a mighty Conflict between the Church and her Enemies,
 " the most violent Struggle of *Satan* and his Adherents, in Opposition
 " to true Religion, &c. And some Parts of the Church may suffer
 " hard Things in this Conflict.

Pretences, she may make to the Contrary. No other Construction can be put on her joining our *sworn Enemy*, when at open War with us, in the Manner she has done; No Power in *Europe*, under greater Obligations to the *British Nation*; almost all the Wars we have been engaged in, since the Accession of King *William*, have been undertaken in Favour of the *House of Austria*. *Louisbourg*, that important *Fortress*, was given up, that the Places the King of *France* had taken from her in *Flanders*, might be restored; yet now she has forsaken us at a critical Juncture; and what may we then expect from other *Popish Powers*. *Spain* appears waiting for nothing but a favourable Opportunity of declaring against us. The King of *Poland*, (Elector of *Saxony*) by a strange Turn of *Politics*, seems inclined to espouse the Interest of *France*. The Connections of the King of the *two Sicilies* are such, that he will readily join their Confederacy: And perhaps the King of *Sardinia*, will be obliged to join or stand *neuter*, in his own Defence. When to this, we add the *Coldness*, to say no worse, with which we are treated by some of our *Protestant Allies*; it gives the Situation of our publick Affairs a *dangerous and threatening Aspect*. And if we cast our Eyes on the *British Colonies in America*, Things look still darker. All our Schemes hitherto prove unsuccessful; our *Enemies*, small and contemptible as their Numbers appeared to us, every where get the Advantage. *Braddock's* mournful Defeat last Year, has been attended with a Train of destructive Consequences. 'Tis not easy to conceive, what we have suffered from the *barbarous Natives*, under the Influence, and by the Assistance of the *French*; scarce a Paper from the *Southward* but brings Accounts of new *Depredations* and *Murders*. What ruinous Consequences may we expect from the *Loss of Oswego*? What an Advantage is hereby put into the Enemy's Hand; the Lake wholly at their Command, where we have expended such Sums. Our *Shipping*, *Artillery*, with the other Warlike *Stores* and *Provisions*, which we had conveyed there with great Cost and Labour; all fallen into the Hands of the

Enemy, to be employed against us. All the *fine Country*, adjacent, lost; and the few *Indians* that have hitherto continued in our *Friendship*, will probably forsake us; and those that have remained neuter, join in with the Enemy; for now seems verified the Observation they made in a late Treaty at *Albany*, “The *French* act like *Men*, build Forts and defend them; but the *English* act like *Women*.”

DARK Tidings of late, like *Job's* Messengers, come in thick Succession, one after another. In the Midst of our Lamentations for the sad Fate of *Oswego*, comes the melancholly News, of *Port-Mabon's* being taken: The Loss of a *Fortress* so important, of such Consequence to the *British Trade*, in the *Mediterranean*, and which gives so much Advantage to the Enemy, must be exceeding great, highly aggravated by the disgraceful Circumstances which attended it; the Ferment into which it has thrown the Nation, and the lasting Dishonour done to the *British Flag*. I shall leave it to the *Politicians* of the Day, to point out the Cause of those sore Calamities, and make but one Remark, which must be obvious to all serious and thinking Persons.

THAT our Misfortunes have come upon us, in such a Manner, as plainly to point out the *Hand of God* therein; and shows us, that our Dependance on our own *Wisdom* and *Strength*, while by our Sins, we engage Heaven against us, is as *vain* as it is *sinful*.----We have been greatly disposed to boast of our superior Strength by *Sea*, and glory in our *Fleets*, as a sure *Refuge* in a Time of Danger; but even *they* have failed us, and at a *Season*, when we most needed their Help, and seemed to have the highest Reason of Dependance upon them. This might serve to cure us of our *Infidelity* and vain *Confidence*, and teach us our entire Dependance on *God*, and how great our Danger is, while his *Hand* is so evidently stretched forth against us. Our Expedition to *Crown-Point*, will probably again, like the Rest of our Schemes, prove abortive. These Things, together with our *divided Counsels*, and *dilatory Methods* of proceeding, make the Situation of public Affairs, look exceeding

exceeding dangerous, and may well alarm our Fears, as to what is coming on our *Nation*, and *Country*.----And if we consider the present State of the *Protestant Churches*, will it not tend to increase our dark Apprehensions on this Head. What mournful Declensions, as to *Doctrine*, *Discipline*, and *practical Godliness*! God has evidently withdrawn his Spirit ;---a sad Decay, as to *vital Piety*, is almost every where lamentably visible ;----A Midnight Security seems to have fallen on the Churches ;----Both Ministers and People, Saints and Sinners, *slumber and sleep*. *Iniquity abounds* ; *the Love of many waxes cold*.----Lukewarmness and Indifference, in spiritual and divine Things ; Want of Affection to *God* and *Christ*, to the *Truths* and *Ordinances* of the Gospel, are growing fast on the Professors of this Age. *The Things that remain are just ready to die, and our Works are not found perfect before God*.---The Gospel, and all its Glories, grow more and more contemptible in the Eyes of *Sinners*, and less precious in the Eyes of *Saints*.---The Lord's-Day, public Worship, and Ordinances of his House, disregarded and slighted ;---The Ministers of the Gospel treated with Contempt by many, with too much Neglect and Disregard by all ; their *Persons* and *Families* poorly supported, their *Character* and *Office* little revered, and the *important Messages* they bring, undervalued and rejected. How widely different are Things in this Respect, from what they were in the Memory of many now alive ! How little of that Reverence and Esteem for the *ministerial Character*, which was so remarkable among our *Fore-fathers*, is to be seen in our Day ; and these Things are waxing worse and worse. Whether this arises from Declensions among *Ministers* or *People*, or both, it must be esteemed a *dark Symptom* on the Church. Time would fail me, to speak of the mournful Growth of Infidelity, Profaneness, and all kind of abominable Immoralities : And when we consider these Things, have we not Reason to fear, that God will purify his *Churches* in the *Furnace*, that they may come forth as *Gold tried and refined* ? Can we expect, that so much *Dross* and *Corruption*, as is now found

found among us, will be purged off any other Way? The *Popish* Powers may be suffered to unite their Strength, to prevail, and carry all before them for a *Season*; to *slay*, or *silence* the faithful *Witnesses* of Christ; to *rejoice*, and *send Gifts*, as if the Day was their own, and to imagine they have nothing to fear from them, who used to torment them *Night and Day*. This, as it will be the last Effort of the *Man of Sin*, and his Adherents, may, probably, be one of the most *desperate Attacks*, he has ever made on the *Reformed Churches*. *Satan* will seem to be loosed from the *bottomless Pit*, and will come in great Wrath, because his Time is short. But, blessed be God, tho' this will be a Time of *great Darknefs and Distress*, yet it will soon be over. The triumphing of the Enemies of Christ, will be short. When they think themselves most secure, and that there are none to oppose their Designs, *sudden Destruction shall come upon them, as on a Woman in Travail, and they shall not escape*. When the *Whore of Babylon*, or *mystical Rome*, shall say, *I sit as a Queen, am no Widow, and shall see no Sorrow*; then her Doom draws nigh; *her Plagues shall come in one Day; Death, Mourning and Famine; and she shall be utterly burnt with Fire* †. Happy shall they then be, *who have come out from her, and are not Partakers of her Sin, that they may not receive of her Plagues*. The Destruction of *Antichrist*, will not be all at once; yet on the *Resurrection and Exaltation* of the *Witnesses*, he shall receive a *deadly Wound*, of which he shall never be healed, but consume away by the *Breath of Christ's Mouth*, and *Brightness of his Coming*. Such sudden and awful Judgments will then be brought upon him, as shall affrighten the *Rest* of the World, and cause them to *give Glory to God*. This, with the passing away of the *second Woe*, in the Overthrow of the *Turkish Empire*, will open a Door for that *glorious Spread* of the Gospel promised in the *latter Days*. The *third Woe*, under the sounding of the seventh Angel, which cometh quickly, will issue in the final and complete

 † REV. xviii. 7, 8.

complete *Destruction of Antichrist*, and *Confusion* of all the implacable Enemies of the Church. Then shall be heard great Voices in Heaven, and the joyful Sound will spread far and wide on the Earth, saying, *The Kingdoms of this World are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever†*. Then, *My Brethren*, tho' we may be entering on the *darkest*, and most gloomy Part of the *Night*, which has continued so long, we may lift up our Heads with Joy, our Salvation draws near. *The Night is far spent, and the Day is at Hand*. The *Morning* cometh, and will usher in a glorious *Day*, when the *Sun of Righteousness shall arise*, and dispel the dark Clouds which now hang over his Church, become a *Light to the Gentiles*, and a *Glory to God's People Israel*; when the *Light of the Moon shall be as the Light of the Sun, and the Light of the Sun sevenfold as the Light of seven Days §*. This Day of the Churches Prosperity, is to continue for a *Thousand Years*; some suppose, prophetically taken, 360,000 Years, that Christ may have a longer *Reign*, and greater *Number* of Subjects, than the *Prince of Darkness* has had; but this may be accomplished in the Space of 1000 Years, (literally taken) of such *Peace* and *Prosperity* as the Church will then enjoy, when the *Increase* of Mankind will be to much greater, and their *Destruction* so much less than at other Times||. Some suppose Christ will reign personally here on Earth, during these 1000 Years, and that his *bodily Presence* will be the *Glory* of his Church; that the *Saints*, or, at least, the *Martyrs*, will be raised from the *Dead*, and reign with him. But such perplexing Questions and Difficulties, are started on this Head, as I have never yet seen answered; and since it is represented as a greater Blessing to the Church, to have Christ *interceding* in Heaven, and the Presence of *his Spirit* on Earth; I see no Reason, either to desire or expect it. 'Tis expedient (says Christ‡) *That I go away; for, unless I go, the Comforter will*

† REV. xi. 14, 15. § ISA. lxxx. 26.

|| See this particularly illustrated in the Treatise above mentioned, Page 47 and 48. ‡ John xvi. 7.

will not come unto you. Without pronouncing any Thing decisively, about the *exact Circumstances* of these *glorious Times*, and the *Manner* in which they will be brought on, I will only say, That it seems evident by the prophetic Description given of *those Times*, that their *Glory* will consist in the universal Promotion of *true Christianity* and *real Religion*, in the Gospel's having its *genuine Effect* on the *Hearts and Lives of Men*; such as were before *hateful*, and *bating one another*, will then have *Hearts glowing* with Love to God, and one another; such as were before the *Plagues and Pests of Society*, will then become its *Ornament, Delight and Defence*; such as were before *fierce and savage, malicious and revengeful, barbarous and cruel*, will then become *kind and gentle, courteous and forgiving, meek and humble*. The *Lyon* will be turned into the *Lamb*; and *there shall be Nothing to offend in God's holy Mount*. When supreme Love to God, and undissembled Affection to one another, reign, it will produce universal Harmony and Peace. Wars and Contentions, angry Jars and Disputes, will cease; *the Lamb shall lie down with the Wolf, and the Nations of the Earth will learn War no more*. Such a *glorious Change*, in such a corrupt apostate World, can be brought about by Nothing short of a *plentiful, out-pouring* of the Spirit of all Grace, who has immediate Access to the *Hearts* of the Children of Men, by his enlightning, purifying, and all-conquering Influences. That the Change must begin *here*; that without *this*, all Means must prove ineffectual; and that *this* is sufficient to effect it, might be easily proved. Such *abundant Effusion* of the divine Spirit; will open an *effectual Door* for the Gospel, to have *free Course* and be *glorified*, which no Man shall be able to shut. A preached Gospel will be attended with such *Life and Power*, as will subdue and soften the *hardest Heart*; it will shine with such *Light and Glory*, as that the Remainder of *Pagan, Popish and Mahometan* Darkness, will flee before it, as the Shadows of the Night before the *rising Sun*. The Inhabitants of the Earth shall be filled with the *spiritual Knowledge of*
 God

God and Christ, *as the Waters cover the Sea* † ; Conversions will be greatly multiplied ; Sinners will flock to Christ, *as Clouds, and as Doves to their Windows* ;---it will seem as if *Nations were born in a Day* : Then will God remember Mercy for his ancient People, the Jews. They shall be brought in with *the Fullness of the Gentile World, which will be Life from the Dead* *. This is expressly promised †, *The Children of Israel shall abide many Days without a King, and a Prince, without a Sacrifice, Image, Ephod, &c. Afterwards shall they return, and seek the Lord their God, and David, their King.* Then may it be said to the Church, *Arise ; shine forth ; for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee ; his Glory shall be seen upon thee, and the Gentiles shall come to thy Light, and Kings to the Brightness of thy Rising* §.

PRINCES and Potentates, will, I imagine, partake of this plentiful Effusion of divine Grace, whereby Kings shall be made *nursing Fathers, and Queens nursing Mothers* to the Church †, disposed to cast their Crowns at the Feet of Jesus, and employ all their superior Advantages for the Honour of his Name, and Advancement of his Cause ; and with what striking Beauty and Force will Religion then shine, when recommended by such distinguished Examples !

MINISTERS of the Gospel, will doubtless have a double Portion of the Spirit, when it is so remarkably poured forth. They will then be like the Angel spoken of in Revelations, who *flew through Heaven, having the everlasting Gospel.* They will fly on the Wings of Zeal and Love, to publish the Wonders of divine Grace to a lost and ruined World. And their Meekness, Humility and Wisdom, will be equal to their Zeal. How different in that Day, will be the Preaching, Conversation and Examples of Ministers, from what we now behold ? And what glorious Effects may be expected from the Gospel, when it is published by those whose Hearts are full of a Sense of its Excellency,

Truth

† Isai. xi. 9. * Rom. xi. 15. † Hosea iii. 4. 5.

§ Isai lx. 1, 2, 3. † Isai lx. 16.

Truth and *Importance* ; and when this *shines* forth in their Lives. Alas ! how little do we know of this in the present Day ? what a mournful withdrawalment of the divine Spirit ! our Words freeze between our Lips ; the divine Art of reaching the *Heart*, and alluring Souls to Christ is departed from us. Long experienced Unsuccessfulness damps our Spirits ; we speak as those that expect to *labour in vain*, and *spend our Strength for Nought*.

CHRISTIANS, in general, will be favoured with unusual Communications of divine Grace, and *shine as Lights in the World*. There will be something convincing and alluring in their *Example* : That mean, low, sordid *Temper*, that contentious, jangling, quarrellsome Spirit, which now appears in most *Professors*, obscures the Beauty of our *holy Religion* in the Eyes of Strangers, and is one of the greatest *Obstacles* to the Spread of the *Gospel*. But when *true Religion* comes to be properly exemplified in the Lives of *Christians*, there will appear such a Charm, and *Excellency* in it, as will strike and allure the *Beholders*, and have a peculiar Tendency to propagate it throughout the *World*.

FAMILIES will then, 'tis probable, be as remarkable for being *Nurseries of Piety*, as they now are for being Scenes of *Disorder*, *Corruption*, and *Vice* ; when *Children* will indeed be *trained up for God*, and come on the Stage of Action with Hearts animated with Love to *him*, and to all *Mankind*, and glowing Desires of being distinguished Blessings in their Day.

PUBLICK SCHOOLS, and *Seminaries of Learning*, will probably become Seats remarkable for *Virtue*, and *true Religion* ; where it shall shine with divine *Lustre*, and diffuse its benign *Influence* far and wide : From those *Fountains* thus purified, will issue *Streams* that shall make glad the *City of our God*. I hint at these Things, as probable *Means* whereby the glorious Designs of God's Grace will be carried on, in the *latter Day*, that with our fervent *Prayer*, we may unite our earnest Endeavours for their Accomplishment.

WHAT

WHAT a glorious Change will soon be produced, when God shall visit these dark Abodes, with such plentiful Effusions of his Spirit ! What a new Face of Things must then appear in the *moral World*. Behold, *I create a new Heaven, and a new Earth ; be ye glad, and rejoice, for ever, in what I create, for I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her People a Joy**. My Heart is enlarged on this delightful Subject, but having greatly transgressed my Bounds, I must conclude with a very brief Address, to My Reverend and dear Brethren, in the Gospel, who are convened on the present Occasion.

1st, LET us prepare for *dark and distressing Times*, if God should see fit to bring them on the Church in our Day.

THO' it be not for us to know the *Times and Seasons* which God has reserved in his own Power ; yet when he is both by his *Word and Providence*, giving Intimations of approaching Judgments, we ought, like *Noah*, to be moved with Fear, and prepare to meet them. This may especially be expected of us, who are appointed as *Watchmen*, to give warning to others. Tho' we can't pretend to penetrate into the *Council of Heaven*, as to future Events, yet *be that runs, may read* the present threatening Aspect of divine Providence ; the *loud Calls* God is giving to the *World*, and to his *Churches*, to prepare to meet him : He speaks once ; yea, twice ; and that in a most solemn and moving Manner ; tho' few regard him. The *Cloud* gathers thick and dark upon us ; our *Nation and Land*, filled with Sin against the *holy one of Israel* ; challenging God to vindicate the Honour of his Majesty ; ---engaged in War with an *ambitious ; politic and warlike Nation*, strengthened by a powerful Confederacy, ---a Nation that has long been *drunk with the Blood of the Saints* ; ---our *Councils* and divided Schemes, turned into *Foolishness* ; our vain Boastings and groundless Expectations, repeatedly disappointed. Have we not then Reason to tremble, for Fear of those Things that are coming upon us ? Should our *Enemies*, enraged as they have been, and flush'd with *Victory* as they now are,

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* ISA. IV. 17, 18.

be suffered to prevail, and put in Execution their wicked Designs, to fill with *Desolation and Woe*, with the direful Effects of *popish Bigotry*, and *lawless Tyranny*, this once happy Land, which has so long been distinguished with *Peace and Plenty*, with *Gospel Light and Liberty*; what a *lamentable Scene* would it open! and what can we expect, but that *Judgment will begin at the House of God*. The *Watchmen* will doubtless first be attacked;---the *Shepherd* snitten, that the *Sheep may be scattered*. What are we better than our Fathers? than the glorious Train of *Martyrs*, who have sealed their *Testimony with their Blood*; and why should we expect to die quietly in our Nests? And are we, *My Brethren*, prepared for such trying Times as may soon come upon us? Is *Christ*, his *Truths*, and *Ways*, dearer to us, than our *Lives*? And can we freely sacrifice the latter in Defence of the former? Should we who are *Leaders* in *Christ's Army*, give back, and cowardly desert the glorious Cause wherewith we are entrusted, our Guilt and Condemnation would be exceeding great. This would be to crucify the Lord afresh, and put him to open Shame, and for such there remains no more Sacrifice for Sin, but a certain looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation.

We may, perhaps, in a warm Mood, like *Peter*, say, *Tho' all Men forsake thee, yet will not we*. But have we that *Self-denial*, *Faith* and *Love*, that would carry us thro' the fiery Trial, bear us up under all the Variety of *Tortures*, which the Wit and Malice of our Enemies may invent? It must be *Love, stronger than Death*, such as many Waters cannot quench. We are loudly called in this Day, to stand with our *Loins girt*, and *Lamps burning*; to have all our Graces, in a lively vigorous Exercise; our Evidences for Heaven clear, that we may be ready, if the Lord should come as a *Refiner's Fire*, and *Fuller's Soap*, to purify the Sons of Levi†. Let us continually look to the Author and Finisher of our Faith, and be animated cheerfully to suffer with him here, under the glorious Prospect that we shall reign with him for ever.

2d. WITH

2d. WITH what Pleasure should we look forward to the joyful Period, when *the Kingdoms of this World shall become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ*; and how ardently should we long and pray, for the Approach of it?

THO' many *Trials* may yet await us, and we should be called off from the Stage, before the *Darkness* of the present *Night* be past; yet it must be a delightful Thought, that the *Morning cometh*, and will usher in a *glorious Day* to the Church, when the *Cause* of Truth and Holiness, Peace and Purity, shall universally prevail, in Opposition to all the Heresy and Wickedness, Tumults and Corruptions, which have hitherto overspread the Earth; when the Prayers of the Saints in all Ages, for the *Prosperity* of Zion, shall be answered, and the *glorious Things* spoken of her in the sacred Oracles, be fully accomplished.

WE, indeed, may be laid in the silent Dust, before this *blessed Day* appears; but we can now behold it, as *Abraham* saw the *Day* of Christ; and if we are possessed of the same *excellent Spirit*, shall rejoice and be exceeding glad. An Heart touched with a dutiful Sense of God's Honour and Interest, can't but be pleased, that he will be highly glorified in this *apostate World*, where he has been insolently affronted, and provoked, for so long a Time: Such must feel some peculiar Emotions of Joy. While some say with the *Psalmist*, in Faith, *be thou exalted, O! God, above the Heavens, and thy Glory above all the Earth* §. To a Soul animated with unfeigned Love to, and zealous Concern for, the *Cause* and *Kingdom* of the dear Redeemer, how delightful the Prospect!---that he will *one Day*, have the greatest Interest in the Hearts of Men; *take to himself Power, and reign from Land to Land, and Sea to Sea*; that his *blessed Gospel*, which is now treated with Scorn, and Contempt, by lost and perishing Sinners, shall triumph over all the Opposition of Earth and Hell, have free *Course* and be glorified, *throughout the World*.

O! WHAT a refreshing, what a reviving Thought! that these *Regions* of *Darkness*, Guilt and Misery, shall be filled

led with spiritual Light, Life and Joy. The present *languishing* State of true Religion, is, indeed, distressing; and the more so, when we consider, that it may possibly continue to the End of our Lives: But how pleasing the Contemplation, that it will certainly be *revived*, and *flourish*, tho' among future Generations; that God shall be served and glorified, by our *Posterity*, in a far better Manner than he has ever been by us. And *that a People which shall be created, shall praise the Lord* §. This may solace us, under the *near Views* of approaching Death, if, with good old *Jacob*, we can say to our Children, *We die, but the Lord will be with you* †. As a believing View of *Zion's* further *Prosperity* and *Glory*, should support and comfort us, under our present *Labours* and *Trials*; so it should enlarge our Hearts, in constant, fervent Supplications to the Throne of Grace, that it may be accomplished. The Representation I have given, of the *exceeding* corrupt and degenerate State of the Church, with other dark Prospects in the *present Day*, should be so far from discouraging, that it should greatly enliven and animate our Prayers; partly, as it tends to give us an affecting *Sense* of our entire *Dependance* on God, for so great a Mercy; and the utter *Insufficiency* of all Means for the Revival, and general Spread of *true Religion* in the World, without a plentiful Effusion of the divine Spirit: And, partly, because Infidelity and Wickedness have arrived to so great an *Height*, and Religion is brought to so low an *Ebb*, that it seems as, if Things were come to the *last Extremity*, and that it was a fit Time for God to appear, and display the Greatness of his Power, Love and Faithfulness, to his Church, to convince the World, that the *Gates of Hell shall not prevail against her*. Instead therefore of desponding, under the present gloomy *Appearance* of Things, let us be awakned to greater *Fervency* in Prayer, and look forward with more earnest Expectations, for the *Dawn* of that *glorious Day*, when the *whole Earth shall be filled with the Knowledge of the Lord*. And tho' he should come as a *Refiner's Fire*,

to

§ Psalm cii. 18.

† Gen. xlviii. 21.

to purge and purify his Churches, in the Furnace of Affliction; yet let us, with united Hearts, say, *Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly.*

FINALLY, Let us be *awakened* in this dark and difficult Day, to a faithful zealous *Discharge* of the Duties of our Stations. It would be sad indeed, if, at such a Time, we should *do the Work of the Lord carelessly and deceitfully*; if, by our *Sloth and Negligence*, we should increase the deplorable *Darkness and Deadness*, which is already on the Churches, and suffer the Cause of God to *die* in our Hands. We have every Motive to awaken our *Zeal*, and quicken our *Diligence*, in our great Work. What we find to do for God, the Souls of our Hearers, and our bleeding Country, we should, in such a Day as this, *do with all our Might*. Allow me in particular, to press the *Necessity and Importance* of uniting our most vigorous Attempts for a thorough and general *Reformation*. This is what we proposed in our *Judicatory*, and to which we *unanimously agreed*, viz. That we would not only *explain, and warmly press in our public Discourses, the Necessity of a Reformation, but exert ourselves in our several Spheres of Influence, to bring it about*. This is what God is most evidently and loudly *calling* us to, in the present Day. He has of late been giving extraordinary *Warnings*, of impending Judgments, by mighty *Winds*, preternatural *Inundations*, and terrible *Earthquakes in divers Places*. The Frame of Nature seems to have been cast into a trembling Disorder, at the Approach of an *angry God*, and as it were in Astonishment, solemnly to call on the Inhabitants of a guilty World, to *repent, and return*, before his Wrath comes upon them to the utmost. The Displeasure of Heaven, has been once and again testified against our *Nation and Land*. We have felt the *Rebukes* of an incensed Deity. The *Cause* of all which Calamities; is notorious and evident to all, who have any due *Sense* of God on their Minds, or believe that he *rules among the Children of Men*. God is openly and publicly *affronted*;---his *Name* used and prophaned, in the most *atheistical* Manner;---his *Laws* violated;---his *Authority* despised;---the

loud!

loud *Calls* of his *Word* and *Providence* disregarded;---and all the *Riches* of his *Grace*, in the *Gospel*, slighted;---while *Profanity* and *Infidelity*, *Luxury* and *Debauchery*, *Pride* and *Oppression*, reign without Controul, among those that make no Pretensions to Religion. *Decays* in Faith, Love and Zeal, a *Conformity* to the World, and *Deadness* to spiritual and divine Things, are visible, and lamentable, among its *Professors*. These Things have kindled the *Anger* of Heaven against us, and it is *not turned away*; but his avenging *Hand* is *stretched out still*. And shall not God punish for these Things? Will he not be avenged on such a People as this? Can we expect, that all the *public Contempt* thrown on his Authority and Government, will be passed by without Tokens of his *angry Resentment*, unless Repentance and Reformation prevent.

It is well known, that I have not been backward in using the little Influence I have, in animating my *Countrymen*, to a vigorous Defence of their *Lives* and *Liberties*, in the use of all proper Means; and I wish it were in my Power, to awake in them a greater *Sense* of the Necessity of being alive, and thoroughly engaged in this *Matter*. But I must freely declare, I have no Expectations of Safety to the *Nation* or *Land*, from any of our *Preparations*, till a *Sense* of our *Dependance* on God, and a Disposition to return to him by *Repentance* and *Reformation*, prevails. The *Judgments* of Heaven are manifestly on us; but who lays it to Heart? Who suitably regards the *Works of the Lord*, and the *Operations of his Hand*? We can discern, or imagine we discern, the Cause of our *Calamities*, in the *Weakness of one*, the *Cowardice* of another, and the *Treachery* of a third, whilst the *procuring Cause* of all is overlooked and forgot. That our Danger is great, and near, is acknowledged by all; but where do we look for Deliverance? Is it not to our victorious *Fleets*?---the *Wisdom* of our Commanders?---the *Number* and *Bravery* of our Men? Our mournful Disappointments, instead of curing, do but increase our *Infidelity* and *Folly*. We can see the Error of our *last Scheme*, and determine to rectify it in the next; almost

almost every one imagines, he could conduct Matters better, and point out a Way of Safety, if he was at the Head of Affairs ; but forgets, that *the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong.* The *Hand of God* is disregarded ;---no suitable Pains taken, to remove the Cause of his awful Displeasure against us. But till there be some public, visible *Humiliation* for, and *Reformation* of, those open Abominations, which cry to Heaven for Vengeance ; we need not think it strange, if God should send such a *Spirit of Confusion* into all our Councils ;---suffer such cross *Interests*, mutual *Jealousies*, and *Distrust* ; such *Divisions* and *Perplexities*, to prevail in our Schemes, as naturally tend to defeat all our Attempts, and bring about our *Ruin*. Should this, I say, befall us, it would be no strange Thing ; 'tis no more than what has frequently happened to a *sinful, impenitent* People ;---no more than what we have Reason to expect, if *Repentance* prevent not §. We, *My Brethren*, who are set on the *Walls of God's Jerusalem*, to give *Warning* of approaching Danger, can't but see the Necessity of *Repentance* and *Reformation*, to avert impending Judgments ; and surely it concerns us, to join in with the *alarming Calls* of divine Providence, and endeavour to awaken in all around us, a Sense of these Things. The Eyes of *God, Angels* and *Men*, are upon us, to observe our Conduct in this *Day* of public Calamity and Distress. From us, the beginning and carrying on, this so *necessary a Work*, is justly expected, whose Obligations to, and Advantages for it, are great and distinguishing.

THE *Glory of God* ; the *Interest of Religion* ; the *Welfare* of our bleeding Country, and the *solemn Account* we must soon give to our *Judge*, call aloud for our diligent *Activity* and *Zeal*, in this Matter, as well as our own *public voluntary Agreement*, that we would unite our *Endeavours*, and exert our *Influence* in our several Stations, for this Purpose ; in which we humbly hope, and earnestly desire, that we may be joined by our *Brethren* of every Denomination

Denomination throughout the *Land*. The Example and Advice of those of the *sacred Character*, we might reasonably expect; would animate *Magistrates*; and *Heads of Families*, to engage in the same *laudable Design*, prove the Means of bringing about the so much needed, and wish'd for *Reformation*, and so of saving a sinning *Land*, from deserved impending *Ruin*. Let our Attempts for this Purpose, according to *our Proposal**, be accompanied with extraordinary *Prayer* to God, who has the *Hearts* of all Men in his Hand; and to this we may be excited and encouraged, by a Variety of Motives; and in particular, from a Prospect of being joined by many in several Parts of the *Land*. Our *Brethren*, in some Parts of *New-England*, have set us a laudable Example, in this Respect, and I hope their *Zeal* and *Forwardness*, will provoke very many; and now God begins to pour out a *Spirit of Prayer*, and *Supplication* of *Repentance* and *Reformation*, on Ministers and People §, we ought to esteem it a *Token for Good*;---it should animate our Prayers;---*envelope* our Hopes;--and *enliven* all our Attempts for the Safety and Deliverance of our *Country*. And while we are opening to our People a *dark Scene*, from the crying *Sins*, and distressing *Calamities* of the Day, to alarm and arouse them from their Security and vain Confidence; I trust we shall not fail to animate them to a *vigorous Defence* of their Lives and Properties, by setting before them all the Horrors of *Popery*, *Slavery* and *Death*, which may follow the *victorious Arms* of our antichristian Foes, on the *one Hand*; and on the *other*, all the invaluable *Privileges* of unadulterated *Christianity*; *British Liberty* and *Property*; in a delightful and fruitful *Country*, which may be the happy Consequences of our *vigorously exerting* our selves to bring them to *honourable Terms* of

* The Synod agreed to recommend it to their Congregations, to spend a Part of the last Thursday of every Month, in extraordinary Prayer to God, on Account of the distressed Situation of our public Affairs.

§ While I was transcribing this Part of my Discourse, received some encouraging Accounts of this Kind.

of Peace.--*Privileges* of infinite Value ! for which we should bravely resolve, to spend our last *Breath*, in Prayer ; the last *Penny* of our Estates, and the last *Drop* of our Blood. The Face of our public Affairs has indeed hitherto looked dark, from a Spirit of *Animosity* and *Division*, which has spread thro' the Country ;---divided our Councils ;---confused and greatly weakened all our Schemes. But, *blessed be God*, there is now a Foundation laid, for our happy Union under a *noble Commander*, a *Branch* of that illustrious Family, which has so long been distinguished for their warm Attachment *to*, and Zeal *for*, the *Religion* and *Liberties* of their Country. The signal Proofs he has already given, of his good *Conduct*, *unshaken Loyalty*, and *steady Attachment* to our excellent *Constitution* ; his generous disinterested *Love* to the *British American Colonies*, which induced him to submit to all the *Fatigues* and *Dangers* of his important Station, for their *Relief*, joined with all the *amiable Qualities* he has discovered ; conspire to raise him high in our *Esteem* and *Regard* ; and must naturally tend to raise our drooping Spirits, and enkindle in every Breast, a noble Ardor to distinguish themselves in the Service of their *Country*.

AND, should the several *Colonies* harmoniously unite, to strengthen his Hands, and nobly exert themselves in the *common Cause*, he might be, *under God*, a happy *Instrument* of retrieving our shameful *Losses*, of humbling our ambitious triumphing *Foes*, and restoring Peace and Tranquility to this bleeding *Land*. Which, may G O D, of his infinite Mercy, grant, thro' J E S U S C H R I S T, our L O R D, A M E N.

F I N I S.



The Faintest of the **KEEPESTER.**

PERMANENT,

THE Faintest of the **KEEPESTER,**
Late of the **Episcopal Church** in
Elizabeth.

Who died on the 7th of October 1748.

1748. 60.

By **JOHN PIERSON, A. M.**

Minister of the Gospel at Woodbridge, New-Jersey.

1 Cor. iv. 2. *It is required in Stewards that a Man be found Faithful.*

1 Cor. vii. 25. ----- *As one that both obtained Mercy of the Lord to be Faithful.*

N E W - Y O R K :

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The Faithful Minister, &c.

VI. 21.

*But I desire to see you in your Affairs, and how I do ;
Tychicus my beloved Son, and faithful Minister
in the Lord, shall shew unto you all Things.*

THIS is the Epistle which the inspired Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians, when he was Prisoner at Rome, and was to have sent by this Tychicus, who is here made a remarkable Mention made in this Epistle, by his proper Name, *Tychicus*, and by his Character, which is added the endearing Epithet, *beloved*, and the cordial Affection to him : And he is further distinguished Character, a *Minister in, or of the Lord*, the same to whom this Title is emphatically ascribed, to denote *that King which God hath set upon his holy Hill of Zion, who is Lord over all Things to the Church*, and the universal King and Judge of the World : For this excellent Person was not only a Christian Brother, but also a Minister of the Lord CHRIST, which is a Name and Title of Office in the Christian Church : He seems to have been an Evangelist, or one employed in travelling with the Apostle, in spreading the Gospel in the unchristianized World, and in going on his Errands in the public Affairs of the Churches * ; for the Ministry of the Evangelists was subordinate and subservient to that of the Apostles, by whom therefore they were directed in the Discharge of their Office. And to his sacred Character is added this honourable Epithet, *Faithful* ; He is stiled, *a faithful Minister of the Lord* ; and this is mentioned of him to his high and lasting Honour, and just Commendation : And this Commendation, the Apostle did not rashly or overhastily give him ; for we find, that having Occasion to mention him again in another Epistle, he uses the same Language, and applies to him the same honourable Character ; *All my State shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved Brother, and a faithful Minister, and Fellow-Servant in the Lord* †. So that this Honour he had, to be acknowledged by the inspired Apostle, *a faithful Minister of Christ* : Whence we may observe this Doctrine,

DOCT. *That it is to a Man's true Honour, just and great Commendation to be a faithful Minister of the Lord JESUS CHRIST ; or to be truly faithful in the Discharge of the Gospel Ministry, and Performance of the Duties thereof, to be a faithful Minister of Christ, is a truly honourable Character.*---This entitles a Man to true Honour, even that which comes from God only, who is the alone Fountain of all true Honour. Here I shall endeavour to shew,

I. WHAT

* Col. iv. 7, 8. Tit. iii. 12.

† Col. iv. 7.

I. **WHAT** is implied in the *faithful Discharge* of the Gospel Ministry, or when a Man may be said to be indeed *faithful* therein : Or, what is necessary to constitute and adorn the *Character* of a *faithful Minister* of Christ.

II. Shew, why this is so *Honourable*.

First, I am to consider what is implied in the *Charge* of the Gospel Ministry : Or what is necessary to constitute the true Character of a *faithful Minister* of Christ.

I. *True and vital Piety enters into the Character of a faithful Minister of Christ; and is absolutely necessary to all other Endowments for his Office, will not entitle him to the Holy Office of the Gospel, who is without Holiness, (whatever earnest Duties of his Station he may perform in that holy and godly Office, without the Fear of God, or true Piety, in his Heart, who is faithful to his Charge, and charged them, saying, thus saith the Lord, and with a perfect Heart ; how horrible would be the true Fear of God, or real Piety, in the Character of a faithful Minister of Christ, in whom it is enjoined by Apostolic Authority to be, Godliness, Faith, Love, Patience, Meekness &c. What greater can be than a Man of God without true Godliness, a Christian Minister, that is not a true and real Christian ? And such none can be without real Regeneration, and true Sanctification wrought in him by the Renewings of the Holy Ghost ; which therefore every one that desires to enter into the holy Office of the Gospel Ministry, or does officiate therein, ought most seriously to enquire into his Experience of ; and not forget that it is required of a Minister of Christ, that he be blameless, sober, just, lowly, temperate &c. ; and that he exercise himself unto Godliness ||. Holiness then (even that Holiness without which no Man shall see the Lord) belongs to the Scripture Character of a Steward of God ; And this all un sanctified, unholy Ministers, have Reason to think of with trembling. In a Word, it appears from the Work, Design, Ends, and Use of the Gospel Ministry, and Scripture Qualifications required of him who officiates therein, that he must be a Man of sincere Piety and true Godliness.*

2. *It belongs to the Character of a faithful Minister of Christ, that he enters upon, and officiates in the Gospel Ministry, with right Aims and Intentions, and with pious Views to the great Ends thereof ; and that he makes the Glory of God, the Honour and Interest of Christ, the spiritual Good and eternal Happiness of immortal Souls, the great and governing Design of his Ministry ; and that he uprightly pursues their noble and holy Ends in the whole Discharge of it.*

Nothing tends more to render a Minister unfaithful in his sacred Trust, than *false and wrong Ends, and corrupt Designs* in his entering upon, and discharging of it : These will be a Pya's on his Mind to vitiate his whole Conduct, and deprave all his Ministrations. It must not be any Part of his End

or

* 2 Chron. xix. 9. Exod. xviii. 21. 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. † 1 Tim. vi. 11. ‡ Tit. iii. 5. § Tit. i. 7. 8. || 1 Tim. iv. 7.

or Motive, much less his primary Intention and last Design, to provide himself with earthly Accommodations, and get a Livelihood in the World; as remembering the solemn Charge of the Apostle, *to take the Oversight of the Flock (or Church) of God, not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind* *. Neither may he be actuated herein from a View to his own Honour and Applause among Men: He must *not love the Praise of Men* †, or *be desirous thereof* ‡, nor seek Glory from them §; but the Honour that comes from God only ||: He must not be influenced by selfish, ambitious, and carnal Designs, or pursue worldly Gain, and vain Applause in the Discharge of his holy Office; but therein always have the Glory of God in Christ, and the spiritual Good and eternal Happiness of Men in his last View. The Glory of God is the grand Design and last End of all Things, and in particular of the Gospel Ministry, which directly tends to advance and promote it, by recovering Men (naturally alienated from the *divine Life*) to the true Knowledge and Love of God, thro' Faith in Christ, and reducing them to a sincere Obedience to his revealed Will; and in *this Way* bringing them unto everlasting Salvation, and heavenly Happiness, *wherein* God will be eternally glorified by the brightest Display and fullest Manifestion of all his infinite and adorable Perfections: And with a pious View unto this high and holy End, the faithful Minister will attend to the whole Discharge of his Duty; therein he will also have a religious and affectionate Regard unto the Honour and Interest of his great Lord; for the Advancement whereof, the Gospel Ministry was instituted, and is well adapted: He will make it his great Design to advance the Name, enlarge the Kingdom, and spread the Fame of Christ among Men, and more and more extend the blessed Empire of his Grace in the World; *To him to live is Christ*: And with sacred Solitude he will endeavour, *that Christ may be magnified* ** by him in the universal Discharge of his Duty: He will *not preach himself, but Christ the Lord* ††; and studiously endeavour to promote his Interest in the World; he will not seek his own Glory, but *the Glory of him that sent him* ‡‡, according to the *Example* of his holy Master. In a Word, a faithful Minister will perform every Part, and all the Duties of his sacred Function, with *this View*, that God may be thereby glorified thro' *Jesus Christ* §§. And in Subordination hereunto, he will seek and endeavour the spiritual Good and immortal Welfare of the Souls of Men. This is the next and immediate Design of the Gospel Ministry.---Christ sends his Ministers *to open Men's Eyes and turn them from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan to God, that they may receive Forgiveness of Sins, and Inheritance among them which are sanctified* ||||. They are appointed (and, when it pleaseth God, by him used) to be Instruments of Men's Regeneration *†, spiritual Edification ‡‡, and eternal Salvation §§, by the sacred Means of Gospel Ministrations; and therefore in performing them, Christ's faithful Ministers will have their Eye always fixed on this blessed and important Design of all their Ministerial Transactions, and Gospel Administrations.

3. Ministerial Fidelity requires, that the Servants of Christ take Heed to their Ministry to fulfil it, and discharge the various and many Parts and Duties of their Office, and not leave any of them unperformed §*.

Various

* 1 Pet. v. 3. † John xii. 43. ‡ Gal. v. 26. § 1 Thess. ii. 6. || John v. 44. ** Phil. i. 20, 21. †† 2 Cor. iv. 5. ‡‡ John vii. 18. §§ 1 Pet. iv. 11. ||| Acts xxvi. 18. *† 1 Cor. vi. 15. Jam. i. 18. ‡‡ Ephe. iv. 12. §§ 1 Cor. i. 21. §* Col. iv. 17.

Various and many are the Parts and Duties of the ministerial Work : It is indispensibly required, that Christ's Ministers attend diligently unto the public Ministrations of the Gospel : It is no little Part of their Duty to preach the Gospel of Peace to the rebel Children of Men, *and in CHRIST's Name and Stead, as his Ambassadors, to beseech them to be reconciled to God, thro' the Death of his Son **. They are solemnly charged *to preach the Word, be instant in Season, out of Season, reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long-suffering and Doctrine †*. And hereunto they must attend with sedulous and faithful Diligence, as they would not be found and dealt with as idle Shepherds, unfaithful Stewards, and slothful Servants, by their great and holy Lord at his coming and Kingdom. And they are under the sacred Bonds of Office, as well as a divine and solemn Charge, *to give themselves continually to Prayer, and to the Ministry of the Word ‡*. And herein they must *study to approve themselves unto God, Workmen that need not be ashamed, by rightly dividing the Word of Truth §, and giving unto every one of Christ's Household their Portion of Meat in due Season ||*. Christ's Ministers are Stewards in his House, and it is required of them to give unto every one therein, Provision suited to their respective Necessities, various Occasions and Exigencies ; and this is to be done by a skilful dispensing the divine Oracles, and rightly dividing the Word of Truth unto them. From the vast Stores of divine Truth in the holy Scriptures, a Portion thereof is to be distributed in the stewardly Dispensation of God's Word, to every one of Christ's Family, suitable to their various Conditions, and spiritual Circumstances. Herein greatly consists ministerial Skill and Fidelity. A dispensing the Word of Truth, in the Neglect hereof, without a proper distinguishing of Persons and Characters, Conditions and Cases, is shameful Management in preaching the Word of God ; And unto a Minister's rightly dividing the Word, and skilful dispensing divine Mysteries unto his People, is required some Acquaintance with, and a well-grounded Judgment concerning their spiritual Circumstances : For, should not a Shepherd endeavour to know the State of his Flock ? And how should Christ's Stewards give to every one of their Charge, a Portion accommodated to their various Cases and Exigencies, and warn and teach every one as their spiritual Circumstances require (agreeable to the Apostolic Example **) without some Acquaintance with them ? or unless they are able to form a suitable Judgment concerning them, what their Attainments in Christian Knowledge are, whether they *need Milk or strong Meat ††* ; whether they are to be look'd upon as savingly converted to God, or as yet destitute of regenerating Grace ; what is their Proficiency or Declension in Religion ; and what are their Difficulties and Discouragements, in the Ways of God ? Hereunto is also necessary, a due Acquaintance with the usual Methods of the saving Operations of God's Spirit, on the Hearts of Men, in the happy Beginnings, and sacred Progress of the same, that the Dispensation of the Word may be suited to promote the blessed Design of God's Grace in its whole Work on the Souls of Men : Want of suitable Acquaintance with these and the like Things, will make Men unskilful, and therefore unfaithful, in preaching the Word, and dispensing the *Mysteries of God* unto the Children of Men.----It is moreover by Office incumbent on Christ's Stewards, to administer the sacramental Ordinances of the Gospel, explain and declare the holy Ends, Use, and Benefits

of

* 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20. † 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. ‡ Acts vi. 4. § 2 Tim. ii. 15. || Luk. xii. 42, 43. ** Col. i. 28. †† Heb. v. 14.

of them, and endeavour the regular Dispensation of the *sacred Rites* of the Christian Institution, *Baptism, and the Lord's-Supper*, unto proper Subjects, and in that Manner which is prescribed in the Word of God.---It likewise belongs to them in the Discharge of their Office, to inspect, govern, and order Christ's Household, as well as to dispense the Word and Sacraments to them ; they are authorized to administer the spiritual Government and Gospel Discipline, which our Lord Redeemer has ordained to be exercised in his Church, and observed among professing Christians.---A Christian Church is a Society of a Nature distinct from all other Societies of Men, and hath a Government appointed for it in the Gospel, suitable to the spiritual Constitution thereof ; And the Dispensation of this sacred Discipline is committed by Christ to his Ministers : The Key of Government, as well as of Doctrine, is by him given unto them * ; and they cannot be faithful in the Discharge of their Office, unless they carefully endeavour to execute all the Laws, Orders, Censures, and holy Appointments of Christ's House, according to his holy Will revealed in his Word.

4. It belongs to the Character of a Faithful Minister of Christ, *That he be furnished with such a Measure of divine Knowledge, and of ministerial Gifts and Abilities, as is necessary for the universal faithful Discharge of his Office ; His Mind must be richly stocked with scriptural Knowledge, and with such a Measure of Acquaintance with divine Truths, Gospel Mysteries, and Christian Doctrines revealed in God's Word, as bears a due Proportion to the Greatness and Difficulty of his Work ; and be accomplish'd with such Ability of imparting the same to others, as renders him apt to teach † ; which is required of those to whom the Gospel Ministry is to be committed.*

He that is employed in winning Souls to God, must be wise ‡ ; Divine Wisdom (or a due Knowledge of the Gospel) is necessary to direct him in his whole ministerial Duty and Conduct : The Want hereof is of pernicious Tendency. The wise Man observes, that *He that sendeth a Message by the Hand of a Fool, cutteth off the Feet, and drinketh Damage §* ; as was moit sadly exemplified in the Case of the Spies sent to view the Land of Canaan, Numb. xiii. 31, 32, 33. compared with the following Chapter. And if the Want of Wisdom in one employed about the common Affairs of this Life, be of such ill Consequence ; what will it be in a Messenger employed in the great Affairs of Christ's Kingdom and Interest in the World, and of the precious Souls of Men, who ought to be one of a Thousand || ! He that would approve himself faithful in the ministerial Work, before he enters upon it, must be in a superior Degree, *skilful in the Word of Righteousness*, and be furnished with suitable Attainments in Christian Knowledge, and considerable Acquaintance with the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God ; and he must use earnest Diligence to make good Proficiency therein ; and to this End, *give himself to Reading, Meditation, and Prayer, that his profiting may appear to all ***. He will incur the Guilt of horrid *Unfaithfulness* if he be slothful and negligent in his Studies : It requires much Study and painful Diligence to obtain such a Measure of divine Knowledge and ministerial Furniture, as is proportionable to the Greatness and Difficulty of his Work, which is such as would be equal to the Capacities of the bright Angels of Light, were they employed therein.---It is no small Measure of Knowledge and spiritual Endowments, that is sufficient

* Matt. xvi. 19. † 2 Tim. ii. 2, and 24. ‡ 1 Tim. iii. 2, † Prov. xi. 30.
§ Prov. xxvi. 6. || Job xxxiii. 23. ** 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15.

ficient to qualify a Man for the right and faithful Discharge of the ministerial Office: He must not only have some Acquaintance with the learned Languages, and liberal Arts, (which will be useful to him in the Discharge of his Office) but also be richly furnish'd with Knowledge and Skill in Divinity: He must be well acquainted with the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, in their proper Order and Connexion, with the whole System of Gospel Doctrines, and Scheme and Design of the Christian Revelation, as exhibited to us in the divine Oracles; and have such a distinct clear View thereof, as may enable him to declare all the Council of God, and make known to Men the Gospel Way of Salvation by Jesus Christ; and instruct them in their whole Duty to God and Man: For he must hold fast, *and hold forth*, the *Form of sound Words in Faith and Love in Christ Jesus* *. Neither may he be unacquainted with the Controversies which have so much troubled the Church of Christ, even from its early Ages; or be unskilful in defending the Truths of the Gospel; for he must be able by sound Doctrine both to exhort and convince Gain-sayers †. But especially and above all it is necessary, that he be well versed in textual Divinity, and *have the Word of Christ dwell in him richly in all Wisdom* ‡; that he be much acquainted with the holy Scriptures, and cultivate a sacred Familiarity with them; that his Sermons may be embellish'd with the Language of the inspired Writings, and with such Passages thereof as are proper to well-illustrate and confirm the Subjects of them, which is their real Beauty, true Excellency, and best Ornament; and is commended to us by Apostolic Example §, which is our Pattern: He must be furnished with such Knowledge of the divine Oracles, as may enable him to rightly expound and *give the true Sense of them* ||, and lead his Hearers into a due Understanding thereof: For he must endeavour to teach Men *all* whatsoever is revealed or commanded by Christ in his Word **, and speak as *the Oracles of God* ††, and confirm his Doctrines *by the Law and the Testimony* ‡‡; and therefore it is especially the Duty of Christ's Ministers, *to give Attendance to reading the Word of God* §§, and meditate therein *Day and Night* |||; and *to daily search* §*, and be abundantly conversant in the holy Scriptures, as knowing *they are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, and not only able to make him wise for his own Salvation by Faith in Christ, but also thoroughly furnished unto all good Works belonging to his holy Office, and necessary unto the faithful Discharge thereof* †§. It does moreover, require no small Degree of holy Knowledge and divine Skill in a Christian Minister, to make personal, suitable, and reasonable Applications and Addresses to the People of his Charge in private, with respect to their spiritual Affairs and Interests; and to instruct, reprove, exhort, and comfort them as Occasion requires and Opportunity offers. And this may by no Means be neglected by those that would approve themselves faithful in their ministerial Duty: *You know* (saith the Apostle) *how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you*, as a Father doth his Children ‡‡. And this Part of the ministerial Work when performed (in Imitation of the Apostle's Example) with parental Tenderness, affectionate Gentleness, and Christian Meekness, is of happy Tendency to promote and carry on the holy Ends and great Design

* 2 Tim. i. 13. † Tit. i. 9. ‡ Col. iii. 16. § Acts ii. 16, to 35. Acts xiii. 33, and 40, 41. || Neh. viii. 8. ** Matt. xxviii. 20. †† 1 Pet. iv. 11. ‡‡ Isa. viii. 20. §§ 1 Tim. iv. 13. ||| Psal. i. 2. §* Acts xvii. 11. †§ 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17. ‡‡ 1 Thessa. ii. 11.

Design of the Gospel Ministry; neither can a Minister's Care for the spiritual Good of his People, *in the Sight of God* duly appear, in * the Neglect of this Duty. And therefore how greatly to be lamented is the two frequent and common Neglect thereof. It does also require not a little spiritual Skill and *divine Learning*, to speak a Word in Season to those that are *weary* †, and deal wisely, safely, and faithfully with awakened and distressed Consciences; and to shun the dangerous Extremes of Soul-destroying Flattery on the one Hand, and a Soul-discouraging Severity on the other; both which every faithful Minister will endeavour carefully to avoid. In fine, a good Measure of spiritual Gifts and ministerial Abilities is necessary in Christ's Ministers, that they may be able to carry the Cases and Necessities of their People before the Throne of Grace, in proper and suitable Addresses to Heaven on their Behalf, both in public Worship, and on more private Occasions and Emergencies. From all which it is clearly evident, that no small Attainments in divine Knowledge and ministerial Gifts, are requisite to constitute and adorn the Character of a faithful Servant of CHRIST.

5. A faithful Minister of Christ will make it his great Design, earnest Care, and constant Endeavour to please his holy Lord and divine Master, in the Discharge of his Office, and whole ministerial Conduct.

He that is allowed of God to be put in Trust with the Gospel (and is faithful therein) will speak, preach and perform all Gospel Ministrations not as pleasing Men, but God, *who trieth his Heart* †. He will not seek to please Men, by accommodating his Ministry to their corrupt Dispositions; but by the Manifestation of the Truth, commend himself to every Man's Conscience in the Sight of God §. He will not corrupt, or adulterate, the Word of God, disguise Truth, varnish over Errors, or endeavour to suit his Doctrines to the Lufts of Men, and preach smooth Things to them; but feed them with the sincere Milk of the Word, declare the Truth as it is in JESUS, and with sacred Sincerity speak as in the Sight of God ||. He will not neglect to preach and inculcate Gospel Truths and Duties, because they are distasteful to the erring Minds, and depraved Inclinations of his Hearers; nor conceal divine Truths, or abate from the Strictness of Gospel Commands to gain their Favour, or secure their Friendship; but endeavour to declare all the Council of God, and keep back nothing that is profitable for them **. He will not flatter Men in their Sins and Unregeneracy with vain Hopes of Impunity and Safety, saying, *Peace to them, when there is no Peace* ††, but *Danger of their sudden Destruction* ††: But on the Contrary, will faithfully shew them their Sins and Liableness to Ruin §§, and warn them from the Word of God, *whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear* |||; that he may approve himself a faithful Watchman, and deliver his own Soul, even tho' obstinate Sinners die in their Iniquities †§. Briefly, a faithful Servant of Christ will, in the Discharge of his Office, acknowledge no Master on Earth, as knowing he hath one only Master in Heaven, even CHRIST THE LORD †||, to whom he must stand or fall in the great eternal Judgment: And in the constant Prospect hereof, by Faith, he will shew all good Fidelity in a form'd unshaken Purpose, and in earnest unfainting Endeavours to please his divine Master in all Things, by con-

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forming

* 2 Cor. vii. 12. † Isa. i. 4. † 1 Thetia. ii. 4. § 2 Cor. iv. 2.
 || 1 Pet. ii. 2. Eph. iv. 21. 2 Cor. ii. 17. ** Acts xx. 20. †† Eze. xiii.
 10. †† 1 Thetia. v. 3. §§ Isa. lii. 1. ||| Eze. ii. 7. †§ Eze. iii. 17.
 18, 19. †|| Matth. xxiii. 10.

forming all his ministerial Transactions and Conduct to the Will of Christ revealed in his Word ; without which he cannot justly expect the blessed Smiles of his high and heavenly Judge, nor to hear from his sacred Lips in the great reckoning Day, *Will done thou good and faithful Servant ** ; but to be disown'd and rejected by him with *Shame and everlasting Contempt*.

6. *Utmost Diligence, and constant Application, are necessary to the faithful Discharge of the ministerial Office and Work.*

The Station of Christ's Ministers is a Stage of Action ; various and many are the Duties thereof, and cannot be faithfully performed without greatest Activity, and unwearied Industry---With sacred Solemnity it is enjoined upon them by the inspired Apostle, to use utmost Diligence in *preaching the Word*. The Apostle *chargeth* Timothy to *preach the Word in Season and out of Season †* ; which seems to imply great Assiduity and Constancy. With no less Authority this is recommended to them by the sacred Examples of Christ and his Apostles. How diligent and unwearied our *Blessed Lord* was in preaching the Gospel of his Kingdom, appears from the sacred History thereof on divine Record : Herein he hath set his Ministers an Example, and they are bound to follow his Steps ; as we find his active and zealous Apostles did, *daily in the Temple, and in every House, they ceased not to teach and preach JESUS CHRIST ‡*. And how great and difficult is the Work of a Minister in this Part of it ? Herein he must endeavour clearly to open, well explain, and faithfully declare unto the People of his Charge, all the *great Articles* of the *Christian Faith*, and Duties of an holy, christian Life, and make due Application thereof to them, according to their various Conditions : He must endeavour to *inform and convince* the Ignorant and Erroneous, *awaken* the Secure, *raise up* sleepy Consciences, *detect* Self-deceivers, *reprove* the Willful, *rebuke* the Obstinate, *warn* the Unruly, *comfort* the Feeble-minded, *support* the Weak § *encourage* the Fearful, *declare the Consolations of the Gospel to Mourners in Zion ||*, *confirm* the Wavering, *reduce* the Straying, and *exhort every one with all Long-suffering and Doctrine ***. We need not Wonder to find the Labours of Ministers compared in holy Scripture, to the Toils of Men in *Harvest ††*, and to the Fatigues of *Soldiers ‡‡*. Briefly : What a vast Variety, and great Abundance of Labour and Duty, are to be performed by them ? How many sublime Truths and Gospel Mysteries, have they to study and preach ? How many Wiles of Satan, and Deceits of the Hearts of Men, to detect ? How many Cases of Conscience to resolve ? They cannot therefore approve themselves Christ's faithful Servants, unless they always abide in the unfailling Exercise of an indefatigable Spirit in the Discharge of their Duty. And hence 'tis evident, that for them to indulge themselves in secular Avocations, and unnecessary Diversions from their ministerial Work, is very sinful in the Sight of God, as being plainly repugnant to the Directions and Precepts of his holy Word ; which forbids them to entangle themselves with the Affairs of this Life §§, and requires them to give themselves wholly to the Business of their sacred Calling ||||.

7. Ministerial Fidelity requires, that the Servant of Christ *do attend unto the whole Discharge of his Work and Duty, with godly Zeal and sacred Fervour of Spirit.*

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* Matt. xxv. 21. † 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. ‡ Acts v. 42. § 1 Thessa. v. 14.
|| Isa. xl. 1. ** 2 Tim. iv. 2. †† Matt. ix. 38. ‡‡ 2 Tim. ii. 3.
§§ 2 Tim. ii. 4. |||| 1 Tim. iv. 15.

He must not only be diligent in the Business and Duties of his Office, (as before observed) but also therein *be fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord* *. Holy fervent Zeal in the Ways and Things of God, is indispensably required of all Christians †; how much more of a Christian Minister: He must be a *burning* as well as a *joining Light* ‡; he must like *Phineas, be zealous for his God* §; zealous for the Glory of God in Man's Salvation; zealous for the Honour and Interest of his great Lord and blessed Saviour; zealous for the spiritual and immortal Welfare of precious Souls; All which are nearly concerned in the faithful Performance of his Work and Duty.----The Strength and Vigour of his Affections and Endeavours, must be exerted and employed in advancing the Kingdom of Christ among Men, by the Conversion of Sinners and Edification of Saints, and in doing Good to the Souls of Men, and endeavouring to promote their spiritual Weal and eternal Happiness. *Eernest Desires* || whereof, springing from holy Zeal for the Glory of God in Christ, a real Compassion for immortal Souls, and from a sacred Regard unto his Office, in respect to its Nature, awful Trust, and final Reward; must enliven all his Administrations and ministerial Transactions: Whatever his Hand finds to do in the Discharge of his Office, he must do it with his Might **; therein he must exert himself with unlanguishing Vigour, and unceasing Ardour of Soul; an inward sacred Warmth of Spirit, must continually animate his Breast, and invigorate him in all the Duties of his Ministry, publick and private; and engage him to well-husband his Time, and employ all his Talents in the Service of Christ, and of the Souls of Men; as knowing he serves a great and good Master, and *watches for Souls as One that must give Account* †† *to him that is ready to judge quick and dead*. If he indulge a sluggish indolent Spirit, and be perfunctory and slothful in his Duty, he performs *the Work of the Lord deceitfully* §§, and reflects great Dishonour upon his divine and glorious Master, casts high Contempt on his Service, and exposes himself to his awful Resentments; and must expect from him that tremendous Reprimand, *Thou foolish Servant* ††, at the final Judgment.

8. *Ministerial Fidelity requires a strict and exact Impartiality in all Gospel Administrations*.----The Ministers of Christ must imitate the sacred Example he hath set them in his own personal Ministry when here on Earth, which is their most perfect Pattern. They must reprove the Sins and Faults of the Rich and Honourable, as well as those of a lower Character, as their divine and holy Master did, *John v. 38. Did ye have not his Word abiding in you; for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not*. And again in Verses 42, 43, 44. *But I know you, that ye have not the Love of God in you. I am come in my Father's Name, and ye receive me not: If another shall come in his own Name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe, which receive Honour one of another, and seek not the Honour that cometh from God only*. Now it is justly supposed that the holy Self-Defence of our Lord, contained in this Context, was made before the *Jewish Sanhedrim*, or high Court of Judicature, composed, no Doubt, of the Rich and Honourable of that Nation.

They must reprehend the Sins and Follics of Friends and Benefactors, as well as of those that are unfriendly and disaffected; an Instance of which Impartiality in our Saviour's Practice, is recorded *Luke vii. 40,---46*. They may

* Rom. xii. 11. † Tit. ii. 14. Gal. iv. 18. ‡ John v. 35.

§ Numb. xxv. 13. || Heb. vi. 11. ** Eccle. ix. 10. †† Heb. xiii. 17.

†† Jer. xlviii. 10. §§ Matt. xxv. 26.

may not, in any Part of their ministerial Conduct, be influenced by personal Kindness or Prejudice, nor sway'd by the Smiles or Frowns of Men; nor be byass'd by Favour and Affection, or by Hopes of Advantage, or Fears of Disadvantage; but therein maintain an universal unspotted Impartiality. *All Souls are God's, and are of equal Value in his Sight* *, and a divine Equity and sacred Impartiality appears in *all his Ways*; And the Ministers of Religion ought to imitate this perfect Pattern in ministerial Transactions: They receive their Ministry from, and must be finally accountable unto CHRIST JESUS their Lord, *with whom there is no Respect of Persons* †; and therefore as Partiality in the Discharge of their Duty, will reflect high Dishonour on him, so it will expose them to his just and awful Repentments. How solemnly is Timothy charged and warned against this Iniquity, 1 Tim. v. 21.

9. *Faithfulness in Christ's Ministers will discover itself, and appear in their attending to the whole Discharge of their Office and Duty, with utmost Care and Caution, much Heed, and constant Watchfulness.*

It belongs to the solemn Charge given by the Apostle to his Son Timothy, that *he should watch in all Things*; without which he could not make full Proof of his Ministry ‡, or be faithful therein. It concerns a Minister of Christ, even above ordinary Christians, to maintain a personal christian Watch, which is greatly inculcated, and strongly enforced by our blessed Lord in his Holy Gospel §.) But besides this he must also exercise a constant Care and ministerial Watch over the People of his Charge, vigilantly observe them, diligently inspect into their spiritual Affairs and moral Conduct; and endeavour so to know their State and Circumstances, as to be able duely to accommodate his ministerial Administrations both publick and private thereunto; How else does *he take the Over-sight of the Flock of God committed to him* ||, according to apostolic Injunction? Unless he be *watchful, his Works* (in the Discharge of his Office) *will not be found perfect* (or compleat) *before God* **. He must prosecute his whole Duty with great Attention of Mind, to all the Parts of it, that he may discharge it in the fittest Time and Manner; and carefully watch and guard against whatever tends to defeat the good Success of his Works.---A sleepy unwatchful Spirit and Practice in Christ's Ministers, are of pernicious and very dangerous Tendency; for *whilst the Labourers slept the Enemies sow'd Tares* ††.

10. To constitute and adorn the true Character of a faithful Minister, it is indispensibly necessary, that he preserve his Christian Profession unblemish'd, and the Honour of his ministerial Character unsullied.

He must be blameless and harmless without Rebuke, in the midst of a perverse Generation, and shine as a Light in the World, that by his godly Conversation in Christ, he may glorify his Father which is in Heaven ‡‡. He must give none Offence in any Thing, that the Ministry be not blamed, but in all Things approve himself as the Minister of God, being exemplary in all holy Conversation and Godliness §§. He must be an Example of the Believers in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Faith, in Purity |||.---He must be an Example to his People in Word, or common Discourse, and therein endeavour to introduce, and be careful to promote profitable and pious Converse; not that which is light and airy, trivial and worthless, not at all adapted to make Men wiser or better;

* Eze. xiii. 4, and 5. † Epa. vi. 9. Col. iii. 24, 25. ‡ 2 Tim. iv. 1 and 5. § Matt. xxv. 13. Mark xiii. 34, 35, 36, 37. || 1 Pet. v. 2. Acts xx. 28. ** Rev. iii. 23. †† Matt. xiii. 25. ‡‡ Phil. ii. 15. Matt. v. 16. §§ 2 Cor. vi. 3, 4. 2 Pet. iii. 11. ||| 1 Tim. iv. 12.

better ; nor that *only* which relates to the Affairs of this Life, much less that which is defamatory to any one, or injurious to his real Character and just Reputation : But his Converse must be such as is suitable to the Gravity of his *Christian*, and becoming the *Dignity* and *Sacredness* of his *ministerial Character* ; and evidence his Mind to be always impressed with the divine Omnipotence, and his own Accountableness for every Part of his Conduct : He may not at any Time, nor on any Occasion, suffer any *corrupt* or vain *Communication* to proceed out of his Mouth ; but that which is good to the Use of edifying, that it may minister Grace unto the Hearers * ; and his Conversation also must be such as becomes the Gospel of Christ †. Therein he must exhibit the Beauties of Holiness to all Observers ; and always so deport himself that Men may be Witnesses, and God also, how justly, holily, and unblameably he behaves himself ‡. If a Minister of Christ lives a careless, loose, godless Life, and behaves himself unworthy his Christian Profession, and unbecoming his dignified Station and sacred Character, he does most wickedly betray the Honour of God, and Interest of Christ ; does infinite Mischief to the Souls of Men, exposes Christianity itself, and the sacred Office of the Gospel Ministry, to Contempt and Reproach ; stumbles the Weak, grieves the Godly, hardens the Wicked, and gives great Occasion to the Enemies of the Lord, to blaspheme that worthy Name by which we are called ; exposes himself to the most dire Frowns, and revenging Animadversions of his holy Lord and righteous Judge, and may expect a most tremendous Catastrophe ; for his Lord will come in a Day when he looked not for him, and in an Hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him asunder and appoint him his Portion with the Hypocrites, where is weeping and gnashing of Teeth §.

Finally : A Minister of Christ, that would approve himself Faithful in the Discharge of his Office, must continue and persevere therein with unshaken Resolution, and unfainting Constancy.

No Discouragements or Difficulties, no Hardships or Dangers may take him off from a fervent Prosecution of his Work and Duty ; neither the Want of Success, nor Reproaches, neither any worldly Hopes or Fears, nor any Sufferings of this present Time, must move him from, or abate his Diligence and Zeal in his holy Employment ; but he must immoveably continue therein, against all Opposition from Earth and Hell ||. Whatever Afflictions or Dangers do encounter him, he must resolve and be able to say with the faithful Apostle, *That none of these Things shall move me ; neither count I my Life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my Course with Joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord JESUS, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God **.*

Thus I have endeavoured to give some View of the true scriptural Character of a faithful Minister of JESUS CHRIST. And shall proceed,

Secondly, To shew briefly, that it is truly Honourable ; and that faithfully to discharge the Office and Duties of the Gospel Ministry, entitles a Man to true Honour. And here,

1. To this Purpose, I might insist upon the Relation which a Gospel Minister stands in unto our enthroned Saviour CHRIST JESUS the LORD, and shew that upon the Account hereof his Character is truly Honourable. He is Christ's Servant, and

* Eph. iv. 29. † Phil. i. 27. ‡ 1 Thessa. ii. 10. § Matt. xxiv. 50, 51.
|| 1 Tim. iv. 16. ** Acts xx. 24.

and the glorious and exalted Jesus the Son of God, is his Lord and heavenly Master, not only by the Profession of Christianity, common to him with other Christians, but by peculiar solemn Separation and sacred Dedication unto the special Service of Christ, in performing Gospel Ministrations unto the Children of Men, and officiating in the important Affairs of his visible Kingdom and Worship in the World. Whence it appears, that his Station is high and sacred, his Work honourable, and his Character truly venerable; how much soever it be despised, insulted, and treated with Neglect and Contempt by Men of dissolute Lives and abandon'd Morals: And it will be found another Day, that our great and holy Lord resents all Indignities and Injuries done to his *faithful Servants*, as done to himself; and will accordingly animadvert upon them, agreeable to the Word which he hath spoken, *He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and him that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me* *. I will further add, and take Leave to say, that one great Reason of the sad and awful Unsuccessfulness of a preached Gospel in the present Day, is, that not only loose Christians and formal Professors, have no due Reverence at all for the Office, Work, and Administrations of the Gospel Ministry; but even those that are more serious, have too little Sense of the divine Original, gracious and holy Ends, high Importance, and sacred Excellency thereof. But I shall not further enlarge on this Head; for it is not so much the Excellency of the ministerial Office, as Fidelity and Faithfulness therein, that does ennoble and exalt the Character of Christ's Ministers, and render it truly honourable: For the Character of an *unfaithful Minister* of Christ, is as vile and despicable, notwithstanding the Excellency and Dignity of the Office, *as his who is Faithful* therein, is honourable; and will one Day so appear in the Eyes of all the World, when he shall be rejected by his holy Lord and heavenly Judge, with Shame and everlasting Contempt. Yet is not the Office the less noble or excellent, and truly venerable, because of the Unfaithfulness of any of those involved with it; but reflects true Glory on the Character of such as faithfully discharge their sacred Betrustment. But the real Honour hereof wholly depends upon their Fidelity in their Duty; and it will appear, that the faithful Performance of the Work of the Gospel Ministry, entitles a Man to true Honour; if we consider,

2. *That Faithfulness herein is represented in the unerring Word of God, as truly Honourable.*

God's Word is the Truth †, the sacred Standard and true Measure of Things, by which we are to judge what is truly Honourable and Praise-worthy; and *therein Fidelity* in any important publick Trust, especially in that which hath respect unto the sacred Affairs of God's House, Church, and Kingdom in the World, is pronounced Praise-worthy, and commended to us with special Marks of Honour. Thus it is represented as holy David's true and great Honour, that he faithfully discharged his regal Trust, *and executed Judgment and Justice unto all his People* ‡, *and set them according to the Integrity of his Heart* §; that is, honestly and faithfully. What high Honour is done in holy Scripture to the Name and Memory of *Moses the Man of God*? With how much Respect is he often mentioned in the sacred Pages? What great Commendation is therein given him? The Sum and Substance whereof consists in his Fidelity to the holy Trust reposed in him; for *he was Faithful in all God's House* ¶, and pronounced so by the Testimony of God himself. He declared
and

* Luke x. 16. † Psalm cxix. 142. John xvii. 17. ‡ 2 Sam. viii. 15.
§ Psalm lxxviii. 72. ¶ Numb. xii. 7.

and *did*, or *acted* all Things according to the holy Will and Appointment of God, and did not with-hold any Thing God revealed to him, nor neglect the least Thing commanded him, nor did he add any Thing thereunto; in which consisted his Faithfulness. I might add, that it is mentioned to the just and high Honour, even of our blessed Lord himself, *that he was Faithful to him that offended him* *. Thus it appears, that Faithfulness in God's House, is truly Honourable, according to the unerring Verdict of his own holy Word. And it will further appear, that Fidelity in the Discharge of the Gospel Ministry, does entitle a Man to true Honour; if we consider,

3. *That herein he is approved by God, and accepted of him, in and thro' Jesus CHRIST.*

The faithful Minister is unto God, a sweet Saviour of Christ, as well in them that *perish* from under his Ministry, as in them that are *saved thereby* †. Tho' Sinners are disobedient and gain-saying all the Day long ‡, of divine Patience towards them under his Ministry; tho' they are not thereby gathered or returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of their Souls §, but obstinately persist in the Neglect of Christ, and his great Salvation ||, and die in their Sins **: *Tis by his Fidelity he hath delivered his Soul* ††, and shall also be glorious in the Eyes of the Lord ††, and accepted with his God, who will not despise or reject him, for the Unsuccessfulness of his faithful Endeavours, and holy Labours in the Ministry; but honour and smile upon him in the Face of the whole World, when assembled before the Judgment Seat of Christ; who will then say unto him, *Well done thou good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord* §§. Faithful Ministers, who have turn'd many to Righteousness, shall shine as the Stars |||, yea as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father &†; and those who are saved by their Ministry, shall be their Joy and Glory, and Crown of rejoycing in the Presence of our Lord Jesus CHRIST at his coming †||: For those that honour God by faithful Discharge of their Duty, he will honour ††, and advance them unto immortal Glory, and bestow upon them a Crown of Life that *fadeth not away* †§; And then it will openly and fully appear, that Christ's faithful Ministers are entitled unto true Honour, and unperishing Glory and Happiness.---Thus I have endeavoured to shew what is implied in the faithful Discharge of the Gospel Ministry; and that the Character of a faithful Minister of Christ, is truly Honourable: And shall proceed to the Improvement of this Subject.

USE I. This Doctrine sets before Ministers of the Gospel, *powerful Incentives unto unwearied Activity, faithful Diligence, and zealous Industry in the Service of Christ, and of the Souls of Men, notwithstanding all the earthly Discouragements that attend them therein; because they hereby will assuredly obtain that Honour which comes from God only.* Hereby they are secure, not only of a present Acceptance with their holy and blessed Lord; but also of that immortal Honour, heavenly Elise, and the unfading Crown of Glory which he hath promised to his faithful Servants: Christ hath said, *Where I am there shall also my Servant be* †††. And the believing Prospect hereof shall not only support faithful Ministers under all their present Difficulties; but

* Heb. iii. 2. † 2 Cor. ii. 15. ‡ Rom. x. 31. § 1 Pet. ii. 25 || Heb. ii. 3. ** John viii. 24. †† Eze. iii. 19. †† Isa. xlix. 5. §§ Matt. xxv. 21, 23. ||| Dan. xii. 3. &† Matt. xiii. 43. †|| 1 Thessa. ii. 19, 20. †† Sum. ii. 30. †§ Rev. ii. 10. ††† John xii. 26.

but also animate them unto unfainting Resolution, fervent Zeal, and faithful Diligence in their Work. Christ's Ministers, if faithful, are wont to have little on this Side the Grave to support and encourage them in their Duty : 'T here is the great Difficulty of the Work itself, and less or more unsuccessfulness therein, and oft Times also perverse ungrateful Treatment from too many of whom they might justly expect better Usage. But under all they have a blessed Prospect beyond this Life ; they are graciously assured by Christ, that if they overcome their Difficulties and Discouragements, and are faithful to the Death, *He will give them a Crown of Life **, and that they *shall sit with him in his Throne †* : Than which what greater Glory, Honour, and Felicity, can enter into the Heart of mortal Man to conceive of. How unworthy a Part therefore do those in the sacred Function act, that are perfidious and slothful in discharging the Duties of it !

USE II. From what has been discoursed, it is evident, *That Christ's most tender Love, and compassionate Care of the Souls of Men, is signally discovered in his instituting the Gospel Ministry, and requiring of these intrusted with it, such Faithful Diligence therein.* For the immediate Design hereof is to promote and secure the spiritual Weal, highest and eternal Interests of Men, that hereby they may be *turn'd from the Exil and Error of their Ways to the Wisdom of the Just ‡*, and be *made free from the Law of Sin and Death §*, by the Son of God, *made free from their spiritual Bondage thro' the Knowledge of the Truth ; that they may be free indeed ¶*, and delivered into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God **, and made meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light ††. All which being the End and Use of sacred Ministrations, it gives us a delightful and endearing View of the adorable Love, and divine tender Compassion of our blessed Lord towards the Sons of Men, thereby manifested ; and shews us the base and horrid Ingratitude of all those by whom the Administrations and Ministers of the Gospel are despised and treated with Contempt and Neglect.

USE III. Hence it appears, *what a great and difficult Work that of a Gospel Minister is ; and that to perform it faithfully, is a Thing of no easy Attainment.* The Consideration hereof may well cause us to exclaim in the Apostle's Language, *Who is sufficient for these Things †† ?* The Ministers of Christ are *not sufficient of themselves to think any Thing aright* in the Discharge of their holy Office, *as of themselves*, or to rightly perform the least Act of Duty therein ; *but all their Sufficiency for it is of God §§*, by his Communication of the Gifts, Graces, and blessed Influences of the holy Spirit unto them, *whereby they are made able Ministers of the New-Testament*, and capable to perform sacred Ministrations to the Glory of God, and the spiritual Advantage of the Souls of Men. Such is the Greatness and Difficulty of their Work, that without a constant and liberal Supply of the Spirit of Christ |||, and continual renewed Succour and Assistance of his Grace, they would certainly faint in their Duty ; and therefore they *should well accept*, and comply with the *Exhortation, to be strong in the Grace that is in Christ JE* vs ††. For it is not any Grace that is in themselves, but that only which is in Christ, that can enable them unto the faithful Performance of their Duty ; They must therefore live a Life of Faith on the never failing Promise of Grace, by which they

* Rev. ii. 10. † Rev. iii. 21. ‡ Luke i. 17. § Rom. viii. 2. || John viii. 32. and 36. ** Rom. viii. 21. †† Col. i. 12. ‡‡ 2 Cor. ii. 16. §§ 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. ||| Phil. i. 19. †† 2 Tim. ii. 1.

they are assured, that Christ will be *always with them* *, by his Spirit to enable them to be *faithful unto the Death* †. How full of Support, Comfort, and Encouragement, is this blessed Promise of Christ to his faithful Ministers?

USE IV. Since the Work and Duty of Christ's Ministers is such as has been described, and Fidelity therein of such difficult Attainment, and they of themselves utterly insufficient for it; hence it is apparent they ought most earnestly to seek to God and look to Christ, implore, and believingly wait for the rich Communications of his sufficient Grace to enable them to Faithfulness in their Duty: They must bow their Knees unto the Father of our Lord JESUS CHRIST ‡, the Father of Mercies §, and God of all Grace ||, and ardently avowise with him for larger Measures of Finings for this Work, and for needful Assistance unto their Duty, Acceptance, and Success therein. They must be assiduous and fervent in retired Addresses unto Heaven, for personal Mercies, and with unceasing Ardours of secret Devotion, ply the Throne of Grace for all needful Supplies of divine Help, as knowing God is able to make all Grace abound toward them, that they always *having all Sufficiency in all Things* relating to their Office, *may abound unto every good Work* **, necessary to the faithful Discharge thereof. And they must also pray exceedingly Night and Day †† for the People of their Charge, that Sinners may, under a divine Agency, sensibly and effectually discern their last Necessity of Christ in his All-Fulness, and so receive him by a true Heart-purifying-Faith, *as to walk in him* ††; and that what is *lacking in the Faith*, and other Graces of Saints, *may be perfected*; that God would fulfil all the good Pleasure of his Goodness in them, and the Work of Faith with Power §§; that they may stand perfect and compleat in all the Will of God |||. It is worth observing, that the devout Apostle in all his Epistles to the Churches (*the Care of which came daily upon him* ††) praying to God in their Behalf, which is a good Pattern worthy of Imitation by all Christ's Ministers toward the People of their Charge, and doubtless will be imitated by all such as imitate him in his holy Zeal for the Christian Interest, and Salvation of immortal Souls:—And it is no less the Duty, and also the Interest of the People, to be abundantly prayerful to God in Behalf of such as minister to them in holy Things, and have the Care and Charge of their Souls. How do we find the inspired Apostle (who had so liberal an Allowance of the extraordinary Gifts, Graces, and Assistances of God's Spirit) asking the Prayers of Christian People to whom he wrote? In what most pathetic Terms does he beseech the Christians of Rome, that for the Lord JESUS CHRIST's sake, and for the Love of the Spirit, they would strive together with him in their Prayers to God for him §†. And indeed the Nature and Design of a Minister's Work, afford unto his People most powerful Persuasives hereunto. Neither can they express any due Regard to the Honour and Interest of Christ, or holy Love of the Spirit, any suitable Compassion and Care for precious Souls, their own, and others, or Christian Tenderness for their Ministers, in the Neglect of this important Duty. Let me further add, that Ministers had need not only be themselves very prayerful to God, and also have the Help of their People's Prayers; but also apply themselves very closely, wholly, and indefatigably unto the great Business and important Duties of their Office, and not suffer themselves by any Means, to be diverted or clogg'd therein, if they desire and hope to give up their

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Account

* Matt. xxviii. 20. † Rev. ii. 10. ‡ Eph. viii. 14. § 2 Cor. i. 3.
 || 1 Pet. v. 10. ** 2 Cor. ix. 8. †† 1 Thessa. iii. 10. †† Col. ii. 6.
 §§ 2 Thessa. i. 11. ||| Col. iv. 12. †† 2 Cor. xi. 28. §† Rom. xv. 30.

Account with Joy : For the Labours and Duties of the Gospel Ministry, are more than a full Employment for the most accomplish'd and laborious of the Sons of Men ; They are sufficient to employ all our Powers, Time and Talents, had we the Capacities, Agility, and Indefatigableness of those seraphic Spirits, that encompass the Throne of God above.

And, Oh ! therefore, my reverend Brethren, let us who have the Honour to be put in Trust with the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, give all possible Diligence, and spare no Pains to approve our selves faithful in the Service of Christ, and of the Souls of Men : Let us most solemnly consider of what infinite Importance it is thus to do ; Let us lay deeply to Heart how much the Glory of God, the Honour and Interest of Christ, and the spiritual Welfare and immortal Happiness of Men, are concern'd in our Fidelity : Let us earnestly wrestle with God, and constantly rely on Christ for his All-sufficient Help and Grace, to enable us to be faithful to him, who will render to us according to our Works : Let us with godly Remorse consider, and be duly humbled for all our past Defects and Short-comings in our Work. Alas ! how little have we done therein for God, and the Souls of Man : Let us form and vigorously prosecute an unswerving Resolution of more close, earnest, and faithful Diligence in our Duty : Let us always be very mindful of our solemn Charge, sacred Vows, and final Account which we shall be call'd unto before the Judgment Seat of CHRIST, *at the great Day of his appearing and Kingdom* : Let us remember we are *Stewards*, and most seriously consider, that it is indispensably *required of such to be faithful** ; and that it is but a little uncertain Time, before our great and holy Lord will come by Death, and say to us, *you may no longer be Stewards, give Account of your Stewardship † ; we cannot continue by Reason of Death ‡*. We have the most solemn and awful Warning given us hereof, by the Death of our beloved Brother and Fellow-Servant in the Lord, whose Obsequies we are now attending : His Removal from us, is a very humbling Dispensation of Heaven to the whole Ministry, and more especially to us in these Parts ; Hereby very much of our Strength and Glory is gone and departed from us ; and on the Account hereof, we have great Cause to adopt that moving Lamentation of the mournful Prophet, *Lam. v. 15, 16, 17. The Joy of our Heart is ceased, our Dance is turned into Mourning, the Crown is fallen from our Heads, woe unto us that we have sinned ; for this our Heart is faint, for this our Eyes are dim*. Does not the holy God, by this heavy Blow of his provok'd Hand, *lift up his awful Voice to us like a Trumpet §, and say to us hereby, be ye faithful to the Death ||, be ye also ready ***.

USE V. Hence we may infer, *it is a rich and great Blessing, for a People to enjoy the Gospel Ministrations, and holy Labours of a faithful Minister of Christ ; and that, when such a One is by Death removed from them, it is to be esteem'd a great Loss, and a terrible Rebuke of divine Providence*. The Enjoyment of these, how lighty soever esteem'd by the Godless and Prophane, is wont to be highly valued by such as know how to set a due Estimate on spiritual Privileges : The Ministry, and faithful Ministers of the Gospel, are the Purchase of the Death and Humiliation of Jesus the Son of God, *who descended into the lower Parts of the Earth ††*, to procure them for his People ; the Bestowment hereof is a great Donation of the glorified Saviour, an eminent Fruit of Christ's Exaltation,

* 1 Cor. iv. 2. † Luke xvi. 2. ‡ Heb. vii. 23. § Isa. lviii. 1.
|| Rev. ii. x. ** Luke xii. 40. †† Eph. iv. 9.

altation, an illustrious Effect of his mediatorial Power and Administration, and signal Evidence of his continued Love and Care toward his Church on Earth; *for he that descended is the same that also ascended up far above all Heavens, that he might fill all Things,* (that is, his Church with Officers, and his Officers with Gifts, as a great Author expounds it) *and gave Pastors and Teachers for the Work of the Ministry, and edifying the Body of Christ* *: These are Means and Instruments of delivering sinful Men from the Power of Darkness, and translating them into the Kingdom of God's dear Son †, and of building up Saints, and giving them an Inheritance among all them which are sanctified ‡. On all which Accounts, such as have any serious Sense of Religion, and Concern for their best and immortal Interest, will very highly esteem them; and the Loss being proportionably great, when God takes away these from a People, it is to be look'd upon as a special Instance, and open Evidence, of his holy Displeasure against them, and should be suitably repented by them, and laid to Heart. This directly leads me to the present sorrowful Occasion, to take some Notice of the awful Frown of Heaven upon the whole Land, particularly on us in these Parts, more especially on this Congregation, in the Death of that eminent faithful Minister of Christ, who has been for a long Time, a burning and shining Light in this Candlestick, and a distinguishing Ornament to this Place. I have been considering, and endeavoured to give you some little View of the *true Scripture Character* of a faithful Minister of Jesus Christ; therein I had an Eye to, and designed to represent something of the Character of that dear and worthy Servant of the Lord, who is lately taken from us, to the Joys and Glories of the blessed World above. And now is it not highly proper and justly expected from us, that we acknowledge to the Glory of God, the Honour and Praise of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, (the alone Fountain of all Excellencies both of Nature and Grace) that *in him* the honourable and amiable Character of a faithful Minister of Christ, was openly exemplified, and the sacred Beauties thereof eminently exhibited? None, unless the Ignorant or Envious will deny him this Honour. But I shall not pretend to assay his finish'd Character, being conscious to myself of my utter Inability to do Justice to it; and that I am wholly unequal to such a Province; And indeed, who can pretend to be equal to it, but he who is equal to him in his uncommon superior Accomplishments. I shall therefore only observe to you, a few Things (among the many that might be truly spoken) concerning him, which may help to affect all our Hearts, with some just and suitable Sense of this humbling Providence toward us in our great and heavy Bereavement. To this Purpose let us duly consider how great, publick, and general a Loss is sustained in his Death; an unspeakable Loss not only to this Congregation, but which extends to all the Land; *for his Praise in the Gospel* was throughout all the Churches therein. ----- Now, this is easily to be apprehended from a little Consideration of his eminent and uncommon Capacities, Improvements, and Usefulness in the World: He was conspicuously possessed of those natural and acquired, moral and spiritual Endowments, which constitute and adorn the Character of a truly excellent and valuable Man, an uncommon Scholar, an eminent Divine, and a serious devout Christian. The great Author of Nature was very bountiful to him, in bestowing upon him with a liberal Hand, those intellectual Powers that were far above the common Level: He was blest'd with

* Eph. iv. 10, 11, 12. † Col. i. 13. ‡ Acts xx. 32.

with a very superior and elevated Genius : His Apprehension was quick and penetrating ; His Thought ready and deep ; His Judgment solid ; His Memory attentive and faithful : He had a wonderful Capacity, on a sudden, to form a due sagacious Judgment of Things ; and hence was a ready, wise, and able Counsellor ; and his natural Endowments were greatly enrich'd and adorn'd by large Improvements : His Attainments in valuable Learning, and useful Knowledge, were great and distinguishing : He made no ordinary Figure in the learned World, and was no Stranger to the most celebrated Authors therein : But Divinity was his favourite Study, to which he more peculiarly applied himself ; and in the Knowledge thereof, he excelled to no common Degree ; and was particularly and distinguishingly acquainted with the more abstruse and difficult Parts of that divine and sacred Science ; a Specimen whereof, he has given us in his accurate Writings on some of them : He had uncommonly clear Views of the Scripture System of Gospel Doctrine, and glorious Scheme and Design of divine Revelation ; had a Body of Divinity treasured up in his Mind, and was very careful to hold fast the Form of sound Words in the present dark Day, in which many corrupt Opinions, and Soul destroying Errors, do so much prevail and abound in the Protestant World, and even in this Land ; And he shewed a warm Zeal in the Cause of Truth : He was very communicative of his Knowledge to others, and peculiarly happy and skilful in imparting his Thoughts : His Style and Diction was correct, masculine, and nervous : He had a remarkable Capacity to treat of Things with a comprehensive Succinctness, and perspicuous Brevity, and to confirm Truths by irrefragable Arguments, and set them in a clear and advantageous Light. In Controversy his Dexterity was of such remarkable Efficacy ; his Strength and Courage so peculiar and distinguishing, as to be observed and acknowledged by all ; therein he was Second to few or none : And his his great and happy Talent he has often seasonably employed to good Purposes, in refuting pernicious Errors, (boldly vented and plausibly civilised) and in defending and establishing important labouring Truths of the Gospel ; for the Defence whereof, he was well qualified by a clear cool Thought, and unwavering Principle ; and has frequently put Gain-sayers to Confusion and Silence : And yet he was not of a litigious Disposition, but a truly pacific Temper, and could sacrifice any Thing but Truth and Duty for Peace : He much excelled in textual Divinity ; *was mighty* in the holy *Scriptures*, well furnish'd with such knowledge of them as enabled him to clearly give the right and true Sense of them, and adorn his Discourses with the sacred Language, and illustrate and confirm his Doctrines by the Authority of God's Word : His deep and ready Penetration into difficult and perplex Cases, and Dexterity in judiciously and safely resolving them, gave him a just Claim to the Character of a good Casuist. By these his excellent Accomplishments he was render'd very capable to direct and assist younger Ministers, and was often repaired to by them, who always found him their faithful Friend and Counsellor, able and ready to do them Service ; and he ever appeared affectionate to their Persons, and tender of their Reputations ; and they will doubtless find their great Loss in his Removal. Such were his eminent Attainments in useful Literature, that he was well furnished for the liberal Education of Youth, and preparing young Persons for the Service of the Sanctuary ; and herein Death found him employed, in Conjunction with his ministerial Work ; and on this Account, our Loss therein is the more to be lamented.

And as he was eminently adorn'd with the Gifts, so likewise with the Graces of God's Spirit ; and hereby his Gifts appeared the brighter, and became the more useful. In him was conspicuously exhibited, the amiable Character given us by the Apostle, *of a Steward of God who must be blameless, not self-will'd, not soon angry, not given to Wine, no Striker, not given to filthy Lucre, a Lover of Hospitality, a Lover of good Men, sober, just, holy, temperate, bolding fast the faithful Word, as he has been taught, and able by sound Doctrine, both to exhort and convince Gain-sayers **. He was very careful to give *no Office in any Thing, that the Ministry might not be blamed †*. He excelled in Self-Government, *was slow to Anger, knew how to rule his Spirit ‡* ; had a great Command of his Appetites and Passions ; was exemplary in Self-denial, Separation from the World, and Contempt of it ; did not pursue the Delights or Splendors thereof, nor *seek great Things for himself §* : He bore Reproaches from Men, and their unreasonable Censures and injurious Treatment, with Christian Meekness ; *was not overcome of Evil, but endeavoured to overcome their Evil with Good ||* : He was of a very generous Disposition, *much given to Hospitality **, willing to communicate ††, and ready to every good Work ‡‡*. He embraced all Opportunities to do good to Men, in regard to their Souls and Bodies, their spiritual and temporal Interests : His Christian Equanimity of Mind was remarkable ; Under all his heavy Afflictions from the holy Hand of a wise sovereign God, and many Difficulties of his weary Pilgrimage, he ever appeared in a quiet *Subjection to the Father of Spirits §§*, and in his *Patience possess'd his Soul |||* : *In a Day of Prosperity he rejoiced with trembling ; and in a Day of Adversity, he wisely consider'd §†, and did not faint therein, because his Strength was not small ||†*. He was in *Behaviour as becometh Holiness ‡‡*, and thereby no small Ornament to his Profession. He went before his Flock in a blameless exemplary Life, as became a *good Shepherd §||*. Thus by a happy Concurrence of ministerial Gifts and Christian Graces, he was eminently qualified for the right Discharge of his holy Office ; and with what Prudence, Skillfulness, and faithful Diligence he attended unto the Duties of his pastoral Care, *you have been Witnesses*. In his Ministry he shewed an holy Zeal for the Honour and Interest of his great and blessed Master, and a serious Concern for the Welfare of immortal Souls : A religious Solemnity, and peculiar sacred Gravity, always appeared in his holy Ministrations : The favourite Subjects of his public Discourses, were the weightier and more important Matters of Religion, and they were well calculated to be useful to the Souls of Men, and make them wiser and better : He greatly inculcated the absolute Necessity of a saving Interest in Christ, by a true Heart-purifying Faith in him, wrought in the Souls of Men, by the renewing Influencies of God's Spirit ; and of that *Holiness of Heart and Life without which none can see God †**.----And as he obtained *Mercy of the Lord to be faithful ||**, so likewise in some Degree successful : How many have been led to Heaven and Happiness by his Ministry, God best knows, and also how many now in this Assembly have been savingly converted to God thereby ; who will be his Rejoycing in the Day of Christ : He had a great and kind Regard for this

* Tit. i. 7, 8, 9. † 2 Cor. vi. 4. ‡ Prov. xvi. 32. § Jer. xlv. 5.
 || Rom. xii. 21. ** 1 Tim. iii. 2. †† 1 Tim. vi. 18. ‡‡ Tit. iii. 1.
 §§ Heb. xii. 9. ||| Luke xxi. 19. §† Ecclesi. vii. 14. ||† Prov. xxiv. 10.
 ||* Tit. ii. 3. §|| John x. 14. †* Heb. xii. 14. Matt. v. 8. ||* 1 Cor. vii. 25.

this Flock of God ; so that, *being affectionately desirous of you, he was willing to have imparted to you, not only the Gospel of God, but also his own Soul, because you were dear unto him* * ; And he was diligent in feeding you with Knowledge and Understanding, as became a Pastor according to God's own Heart †, and he guided you by the Skilfulness of his Hands ‡, and defended you on every Side, and now is gone to receive the Reward of all his holy Labours, from the liberal and gracious Hand of the great and chief Shephard, who at his appearing and Kingdom, will undoubtedly bestow upon him, a Crown of Life and Glory, which fades not away §. And should you not, most seriously consider this bereaving Operation of God's holy Hands towards you || : This Removal is indeed an awful Frown upon a sinning Generation in the Land, to which he was many Ways a great Blessing ; but in a peculiar Manner is this heavy Blow from Heaven to be daly repented by this Congregation, and improved to awaken you to a serious, timely deep, and godly Repentance ; to search and try your Ways, and unfeignedly turn unto him, who has thus terribly smitten you ; and seek the Lord of Hosts while he is to be found, that his Anger may be turned away from you, and his awful Hand not be stretched out still **, lest God stir up against you all his Wrath ††, and take his Kingdom (or a preached Gospel) from you ‡‡, and remove your Candlestick out of his Place, except you repent §§. Repent therefore, and turn yourselves from all your Transgressions, that Iniquity may not be your Ruin |||. In this awful Providence toward you, God's Voice cries §† aloud to deaf dead-hear'd Sinners among you, who are going on still in your Trespases †||, and continue quiet and easy in their Soul-destroying Unregeneracy of Heart, and are not reform'd in Life, nor alarm'd out of their carnal Security, by all the solemn Admonitions given them by this faithful Servant of God, who was a Son of Thunder to hardned careless Sinners, and skilful in setting the Terrors of the Lord before them, and has often warned you to flee from the Wrath to come. And do you still persist in your Sins, and careless Neglect of the great Salvation ; remain at Ease in Zion ‡‡, and cry Peace and Safety to yourselves, when sudden Destruction is ready to come upon you †§ ? Oh ! awake out of Sleep, arise from the Dead, that Christ may give you Light ||‡, lest the holy God, who hath already called away from you his Ambassador, swear in his Wrath against you, that his Spirit shall no longer strive with you *§ ; and leave you sealed up under Hardness of Heart, unto the Judgment of the great Day.

And let careless slothful Professors be roused up by this awakening Dispensation of Heaven, to seek in earnest the Oyl of Grace in your Hearts, and no longer content yourselves with Lamps of lifeless, lazy, barren Profession ; lest, when our great Lord, the heavenly Bridegroom of the Church, high and eternal Judge of the World, shall come, your Lamps go out in obscure Darkness †*. And let all God's People see to it, that you be not slothful, but Followers of them who thro' Faith and Patience inherit the Promises *†, and lay aside every weight, and the Sin that easily besets you, and run with Patience the Race that is set before us, still looking to the great Author and Finisher of our Faith ||* : take heed to yourselves that your Hearts be not overcharged with the Cares of this Life, and so that Day come upon you unawares ||*|| ; but watch and pray always, that

* 1 Thess. ii. 8. † Jer. iii. 15. ‡ Psa. lxxviii. 72. § 1 Pet. v. iv.
 || Psa. xxviii. 4. ** Isa. ix. 13, 17. †† Psal. lxxviii. 38. ‡‡ Matt. xxi. 43.
 §§ Rev. ii. 5. ||| Ezek. xviii. 30. §† Mic. vi. 9. †|| Psa. lxxviii. 21.
 †† Amos vi. 1. †§ 1 Thessa. v. 3. ||‡ Eph. v. 14. *§ Gen. vi. 3.
 †* Prov. xx. 20. *† Heb. vi. 12. ||* Heb. xii. 1, 2. ||* Luke xxi. 34.

that you escape all the dire Destructions that are hastning on a secure infidel World, and stand before the Sun of Man with Joy and Triumph, when he shall come in the Glory of his Father, with his holy Angels, and reward every Man according to his Works *.

USE VI. The present Doctrine affords Matter of strong Consolation to us under our Bereavement of Christ's faithful Ministers by their Death. Therein it is true our Loss is exceeding great, and thereby the divine Anger is awfully manifested against us; It will therefore bring us under the just Censure and severe Rebuke of God's holy Word, if we do not lay it deeply to Heart †, and are not suitably grieved when we are thus stricken by him ‡; but we are not to weep for them, but for ourselves and for our Children §; for to them to live was Christ, and therefore to die was infinite Gain ||; They have finished their Course and their Ministry **, and are entered into the Joy of their Lord ††; And why should we weep or grieve for them? they have overcome, and are admitted to sit with Christ in his Throne ††; and shall we mourn for their heavenly Honour and glorious Advancement?

Let then the believing Consideration of the State of future Glory and Happiness, which Christ's faithful Ministers are received into at Death, mitigate our Sorrow for the Death of this deceased Servant of the Lord. Let it relieve and support our grieved Spirits, that now he is absent from the Body he is present with the Lord §§ to behold his Glory; and partake in his Joy; that he is gone to be with Christ, which is far better ||| for him, than being with us in this World of Sin and Sorrow, where we ourselves groan within ourselves §||, being burthened while in this Tabernacle, desiring to be clothed upon with our House which is from Heaven †§. Let this Word of Comfort be applied in particular to the mournful Relict, and Children of the deceased Servant of God. Let the realizing Thoughts of the happy State he is gone to, give some Allay to your Grief, and support your Spirits under this heavy Stroke of your heavenly Father's Hand. Let your Sorrow be turn'd into, and run in the right Channel: Take heed that it be not the Sorrow of the World that works Death, but that godly Sorrow which worketh Repentance to Salvation not to be repented of †||, that you may receive no Damage to your spiritual Interests hereby; but on the Contrary that you may happily find, that even this great Affliction works for your best Good, that you may hereby have fresh and fuller Evidence that you love God, and are the Called according to his Purpose ||†. May the God of all Grace and Consolation, support and comfort his Handmaid in her afflictive Widow-hood! May the everlasting Arms be underneath her *†, and the eternal God her Refuge in this Day of Affliction §†, and the Strength of her Heart and her Portion for ever §*. May the Children have their Father's God, for their God and Father in Christ, and their Guide to Death *†: May the Lord their Redeemer, and their God, teach them to spiritually profit by this Providence, and lead them in the Way (of humble, quiet, penitent Submission) wherein they should go *|| under it. And may we all be prepared and duly preparing for Death and Eternity, unto which we are hastning every Moment! Let

* Matt. xvi. 27. † Isa. xlii. 25. ‡ Jer. v. 3. § Luke xxiii. 28. || Phil. i. 21. ** Acts xxviii. 24. †† Mat. xxv. 21. †† Rev. iii. 21. §§ 2 Cor. v. 8. ||| Phil. i. 23. §|| Rom. viii. 23. †§ 2 Cor. iv. 2, 4. †|| 2 Cor. vii. 9. 10. ||† Rom. viii. 23. *† Deut. xxxiii. 27. §† Jer. xvi. 19. §* Psa. lxxiii. 26. *† Psa. xlviii. 14. *|| Isa. xlviii. 37.

Let us endeavour thro' Grace to follow this Servant of God, *wherein he follow'd Christ*, until we also come to inherit the *Promises which are exceeding great and precious* *.

Let us give all Diligence to be found of our Lord in Peace, *without Spot, and blameless*, accounting that his Long-suffering toward us, is Salvation †, that when he shall appear we may have Confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his Coming ‡: Unto him be Glory in the Church throughout all Ages, World without End. Amen §.

* 2 Pet. i. 4. † 2 Pet. iii. 14, 15. ‡ 1 John ii. 28. § Eph. iii. 21.

F I N I S.



The FAITHFUL MINISTER Encouraged.

A

S E R M O N,

Preached at the Opening of the *SYNOD* of
of *NEW-YORK*, met at *Philadelphia*, *October* 1. 1755.

By *JAMES DAVENPORT*, A. M. late Minister
of the Gospel at *Southwold*, on *Long-Island*,
now at *Hopewell*, in *New-Jersey*.

Published at the Request of some of the Hearers.

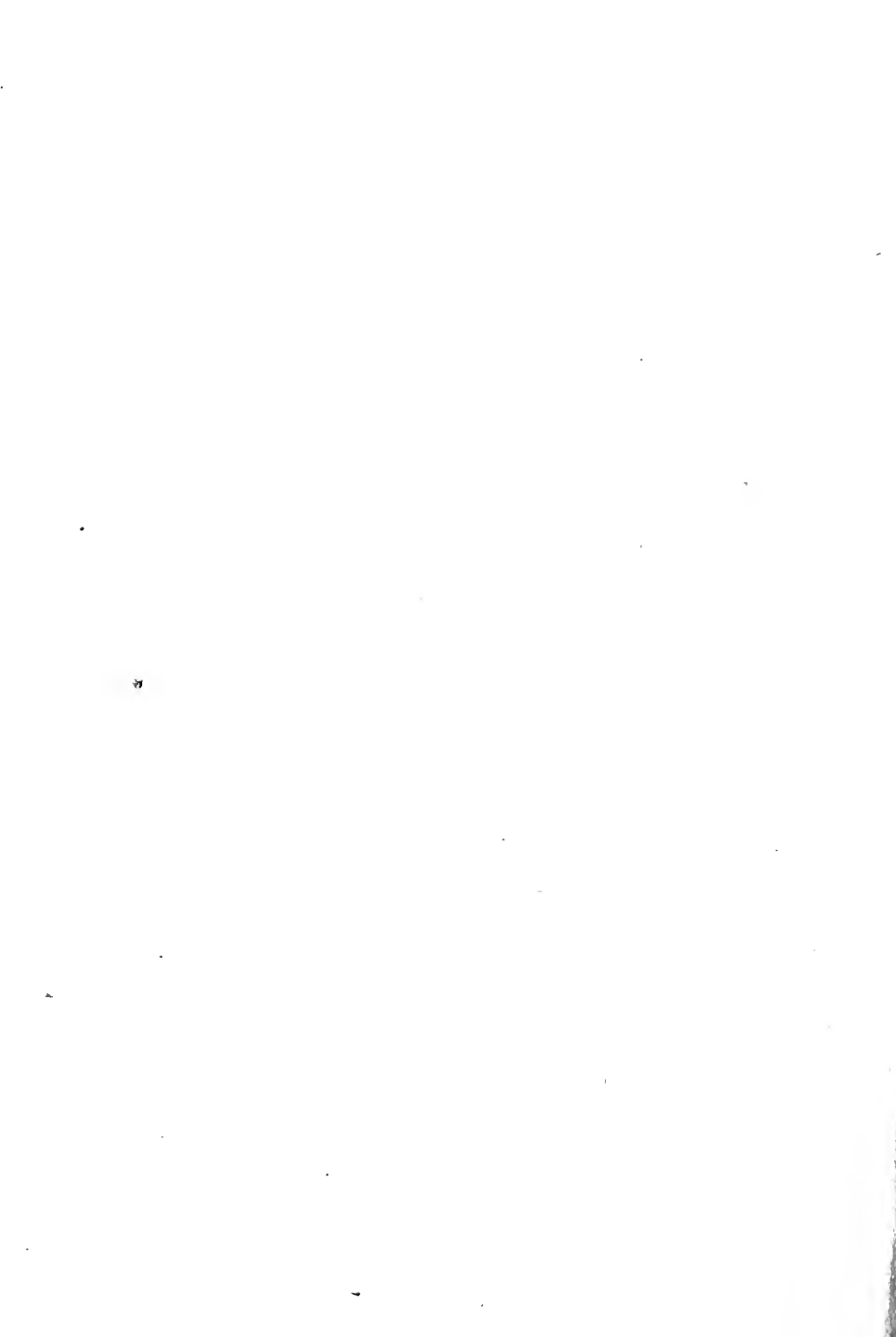
COL. iv. 17. And say to Archippus, Take heed to the Ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

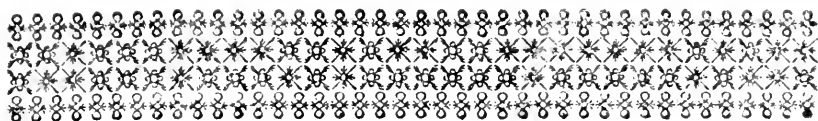
I TIM. iv. 16. Take heed unto thy Self, and unto thy Doctrine : Continue in them : For in doing this, thou shalt both save thy Self, and them that hear thee.

I PET. v. 4. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a Crown of Glory, that fadeth not away.

P H I L A D E L P H I A :

Printed by *James Chattin*, at the Newest-Printing-Office, on
the South Side of the *Jersey Market*. 1756.





P R E F A C E.

Candid R E A D E R,

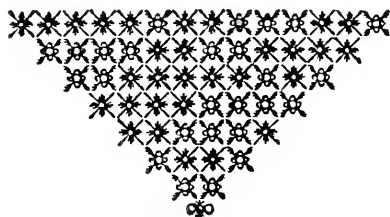
THE following Sermon needs no Commendation. The Truth, Weight and Seasonableness of its Matter, the Sobriety of its Style, the Modesty of its Address, together with the Spirit of Piety, of Humility, of undisguised Zeal for God, and affectionate Love to Man, which breathes in every Part, and animates the Whole, will commend it to the Consciences of all that fear God, who have the Pleasure of perusing it. Here are no high sounding Words of Vanity, or little Artifices to exalt himself, and catch a vulgar Applause; but an honest, serious Endeavour to honor God, and do good to Mankind.—Let not the pious Author be offended with our Freedom, in saying, that his Life adds Weight to this Discourse; for the Latter is but a Copy of the Former: Nor should it be forgotten, that the gracious God, who delights to honor the Humble and Sincere in Heart, gave manifest Tokens of his special Presence, when this Discourse was delivered: Not only the Speaker, but divers of the Hearers, both Ministers and People, being solemnly affected and tenderly touched with the precious Truths therein contained.—May God, of his infinite Mercy, keep these Things in the Imagination of the Thoughts of our Hearts, and enable us to act accordingly:

May we, especially who are of the Sacred Order, obtain Mercy to be faithful, as well as prudent and humble unto Death.

There is nothing of greater Consequence to the Weal of the Churches, than taking due Care respecting the Admission of Candidates into the Ministry. If we are lax in this, and easily introduce Persons who have no positive Evidences of vital Godliness ; Error will come in as a Flood, and inundate the Churches ; experimental Piety gradually languish, and at last totally expire : To prevent which awful Events, may Almighty GOD bless the following Discourse.—We add no more, but remain thy Servants for CHRIST's Sake.

*Philadelphia, Nov.
17. 1755.*

*GILBERT TENNENT,
RICHARD TREAT.*





The FAITHFUL MINISTER Encouraged :

A

S E R M O N, &c.

2 CORINTH. iv. 1. *Therefore seeing we have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy, we faint not.*

TH E Dispensation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, *Men, Brethren and Fathers*, in several important respects, far excels in Glory the *Mosaic* Dispensation. This the Apostle had observed and clearly proved in the preceding Chapter, and from thence draws the just Conclusion in our Text, *Therefore seeing we have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy, we faint not.*

Here we may observe several Things.

1. We have the Gospel Ministry refer'd to, call'd, *This Ministry.*

2. Here are some engag'd in this Work : *WE HAVE this Ministry.* They are put in Trust with the Gospel (a).

3. This is to be acknowledged as a Mercy from God : *As we have RECEIVED MERCY,* Some Expositors chuse to join this Sentence with the last Clause, thus ; *as we have received Mercy, we faint not.*

These

a 1 *Thes.* ii. 4.

These understood the Mercy here intended, to be, that of Ministers being kept from fainting under their Trials.

Others join the two first Sentences in our Text together thus, *Therefore seeing we have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy.* They conceive the Mercy here spoken of is that of being call'd and employ'd in the sacred Work. *Bezaz's* Judgment in particular is mentioned in the Continuation of *Posle's* Annotations, in these Words ; " The Translucers of this great Apostle took Advantage from his great Trials and Afflictions, by reason of them, to conclude him no such Man, as he was by some represented ; and the Apostle upon that takes Advantage to magnify his Office. God (*saith he*) having intrusted us with so glorious a Ministry, as I have proved that of the Gospel to be, according to the Measure and Proportion of Gifts and Graces, which God hath bestowed upon us, or by reason of that infinite Grace and Mercy, which God hath shewed us, in calling us to so honorable a Station and Office, though we meet with many Adversaries, many Afflictions, many Difficulties, yet we bear up, and sink not under them, nor faint in our Spirits because of them."

Thus far he. In this Sense I propose to consider the Words of our Text.

4. We may observe, that great Difficulties must be expected in the Work of the Gospel Ministry, or there would be no Danger of *Fainting*.

Again, that we ought not to faint under these Difficulties and Trials, but should be able to say, through Grace, with the Apostle, *we faint not*.

And further, that an excellent Argument against *Fainting* in this Work, may be drawn from the Gospel Ministry itself, and the several Motives, that relate to it. *Therefore seeing we have this Ministry, we faint not.*

Lastly,

Lastly, That faithful Ministers are kept from *Fainting*, by these precious Truths and Motives set home with divine Power on their Souls ; hence they can say with the Apostle, *We faint not* ; otherwise we should surely *faint*.

I might comprize these important Observations in a general One, and lay it down as the Foundation of the present Discourse ; but as that would open too large a Field for this Opportunity, I shall *confine* myself to the Consideration and Improvement of these two Things, *viz.* The *Mercy* of being call'd to the Work of the Gospel Ministry, and some of the *Reasons* and *Arguments* which are adapted to guard against extreme Discouragements, and to excite to active and persevering Diligence and Faithfulness in the Work.

And here I would humbly and earnestly intreat my reverend *Fathers* and *Brethren* (with others of *God's People* present) to lift up your Hearts with Faith and Fervency to the God of all Grace and Fulness in Jesus Christ, that I may be enabled so to *speak* on these Heads, and you so to hear, as that our Souls may be much quickened and animated in our Work, in order to the saving Good of many Souls, and the Advancement of the Divine Glory in the World.

I am, according to the Method propos'd,

1. To consider it as a *Mercy* to faithful Ministers of the Gospel, that they have *this Ministry*, that they are call'd to this Work. *We have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy*, saith our Text. God in his Mercy is set forth by an excellent Divine, as God willing to succour sinful Men in their Misery. And how is this remarkably manifested to, and experienced by such of the sinful miserable Sons of Men, as are prepared for, and improved in the ministerial Work. Thus the Apostle *Paul*, with respect to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to his Trust, says, *I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the Ministry (b).*

b 1 Tim. i. 11, 12.

Indeed,

Indeed, when Men rush into the Ministry, without the Qualifications which the Word of God requires ; they act a most foolish Part, and a Part most dangerous and pernicious, both to themselves and others : But when they are endow'd with those Qualifications, and withal set apart to the sacred Work by Fasting and Prayer, and the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery (*c*) they may well be drawn out in Thankfulness to God and Christ, on the Account, and say, This is a *Mercy*, a *great Mercy*, confer'd on us *unworthy, vile and sinful* Dust, *that unto us is committed the Ministry of Reconciliation* (*d*).

This the Ambassadors of Christ justly esteem a *Mercy*, as it respects *themselves*, as it respects *others*, and as they may thus in an *eminent* Degree promote the *Divine Glory* in the World.

1. As it respects *themselves*.

What a Mercy is it to be call'd to a Work, which is calculated to promote their Increase of *Grace* as well as *Gifts* ? And what a *Comfort* must it be to the faithful Ministers of the Gospel, to consider, that their *general* and *particular* Callings do happily coincide and subserve each other ? Their general Calling, the Care of *their own* Souls, their particular Calling, the Care of *others* Souls. The more closely they walk with God themselves, so much the more faithful and engag'd they are in their Work, and the more likely to be successful ; and on the other Hand, the more faithful they are in their Work, through Grace, so much the more *they grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (*e*). So much the more *their Souls prosper and are in Health* (*f*) and ordinarily the more they enjoy the *Consolations* of the Divine Spirit, *which are not small*, the more their Light shines before others, and they adorn their

Pro-

c Acts xiv. 23. *i* Tim. iv. 14. *d* 2 Cor. v. 18, 19.
e 2 Pet. iii. 18. *f* Epist. of John v. 2.

Profession, and the more they are attemper'd to the heavenly State, and prepared for eternal Glory.

'Tis true they are from several Quarters beset at times with Temptations, perhaps more so than others; as Officers in an Army are more aim'd and pointed at by the Enemy than private Soldiers; but these Temptations their great Lord and Leader wisely permits, to *prove* them, and bring them to know more of themselves, that they may take root downwards, in order to bear Fruit upwards; he shews them thus their own Insufficiency, and leads them to depend upon his All-sufficiency in the New Covenant, and hereupon they find him *a very present Help in Trouble* (g): They are thus humbled and purified, and made more meet for their Master's Service, more watchful and circumspect, more patient and resign'd under Trials and Sufferings, and more diligent in their Work, and probably more successful too; and this is a *great Mercy*,

Again, the Ministers of Jesus Christ, are to *give themselves to reading, to Meditation and Prayer*; and how may they thus, through the divine Blessing, grow apace, both in doctrinal and experimental Knowledge, yea, I may add, in every Christian Grace and Virtue? And is not this a *great Mercy*?

It is a further Comfort and a Mercy too, that we, who have *this Ministry*, may be preaching to ourselves, as well as praying over the Sermons we prepare for, and preach to others; yea, we may see more clearly the beautiful Harmony and Connection of divine Truths, as well as feel more of the happy Effects of them; while we are attending on the Exposition of sacred Scripture, and when catechising our People, or making Preparations therefor.

In the Administration of divine Ordinances, especially the Sacraments of the New Testament, how may we reap much Profit and Pleasure ourselves, through Grace, see more of

the Faithfulness, Grace, Holiness, and other Perfections of our God and Saviour ; and grow more holy, comfortable and fruitful.

In our *Pastoral Visits* we may often, through Divine Assistance, caution and comfort, direct and edify others and ourselves at the same Time,

And in the Discipline of God's House, while we endeavour to reclaim others, we may be not a little guarded and benefited ourselves : We may be led to see much of the Aggravations and Evil of Sin, the Snares that lie thick around, the constant Necessity of Watchfulness and Prayer, and of living by Faith on God in Christ ; that we may as *Christians*, and as *Ministers*, bring forth much Fruit.

In a Word, *every* Part of the ministerial Work is in some respect or other adapted to promote our increasing Conformity to the Perfections and Will of God in our Hearts and Lives : Is it not then a *Mercy*, a *great Mercy*, that we have been call'd to this Work ? *We have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy.*

Though it is a difficult, yet it is also a delightful and useful, as well as honourable Work ; and it is a *Mercy*, not only with respect to *us*, but also,

2. With respect to *others*.

It is truly adapted, both in the public and private Parts of it, as a Means to promote the best, the everlasting Interests of all our Hearers ; but Men are hardened by Sin and Unbelief, and blinded by Satan and the World : *They hate the Light, and will not come to the Light, lest their Deeds should be reprov'd (b).* And nothing short of the Almighty Energy of the Holy Ghost, will make the Word effectual to saving Purposes ; well may the *Regenerate* then be said to be *born of the Spirit (i)*. *By Grace we are saved, through Faith,*
and

and that not of ourselves, it is the Gift of God : Not of Works, lest any Man should boast (*k*). But as the Spirit makes Use of the Word, so we are said to be *born again by the Word of God, and begotten through the Gospel* (*l*). And Faith is said to come by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word of God ; for how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a Preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent (*m*)? The Apostle was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for, says he, *it is the Power of God unto Salvation to every one that believeth*† ; and to these we are the Saviour of Life unto Life, through rich Grace, although to others the Saviour of Death unto Death (*n*).

We are call'd in the ministerial Work, as Instruments to *instruct* the Ignorant, to *convince* the Erroneous, to *reclaim* the Vicious, to *awaken* the Secure, to *rouze* the Slothful, to *sap* the Foundation of Hypocrites, and to *show* the Self-righteous their extream and destructive Folly ; and though this is truly hard Work, yet it must be done in God's Strength, and when done and blest, very useful.

It is further useful and pleasant withal, to *direct* enquiring Souls to Christ, to *win* them over to him, through his all-powerful Grace, that they may receive him in his most glorious Person and precious Benefits, as he is offer'd in the Gospel: And what a *Mercy* is this both to us and them.

Again, we are call'd as Instruments, to *build up* the Saints in Faith, and Holiness, and Comfort. We are to *comfort* them in their Trials from within and without, *with the*

B 2 *same*

† Very just then is the Conclusion drawn by the pious and ingenious Watts,
 Should all the Forms that Men devise,
 Assault my Faith with treach'rous Art,
 I'd call them Vanity and Lies,
 And bind the Gospel to my Heart.

k Eph. ii. 8, 9. *l* 1 Pet. i. 23. 1 Cor. iv. 15. *m* Rom. x. 17, 14, 15. *n* Rom. i. 16. 2 Cor. ii. 16.

same Consolations, wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. And is it not a Favour to be made thus useful to God's People? We were call'd in our Work *to carry the Lambs in our Bosom, and gently to lead those that are with Young,* after the Example and under the Influence of the great, the chief Shepherd (*p*). We are to give *Milk to Babes,* as well as *strong Meat* to the more grown (*q*) *to strengthen the Weak, to fix the Wavering, to guide the Doubting, to quicken the Backward, to succour the Tempted, to direct Believers to be strong,* not in the Grace they have received, but *in the Grace which is in Christ Jesus*; and to be engaged, through Grace, in improving the Comforts they enjoy, as Encouragements and Means to an higher End, even Holiness and the Divine Glory. Thus our Work, the *ministerial* Work is adapted, and thus it is blest to the Benefit of many Souls: We may justly say then, *We have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy*: Especially since,

3. We may, with Divine Assistance, by and in this Work, in an *eminent* Degree promote the *Divine Glory* in the World.

How is the Glory of God and Christ and true *Religion* manifested by our Increase in Gifts and Grace, in Holiness and Usefulness. Thence it appears in some Measure what a Master we serve, what a God we worship, what a Saviour we preach and offer, what a *Religion* we profess and recommend.

My Brethren, certainly God is the greatest and best of Beings; surely then, the setting him forth to be, or manifesting him as such, is the greatest and highest End that can be: This is his Glory, this End is worthy of a God, and this is the highest End of all his Friends, Children and Servants: This End, the Work of the Ministry, is wonderfully suited and blest to promote: What a *Mercy* is it then to any of us *wile, apostate and perishing* Sons of Men, to be brought
p *Isa.* xl. 2. *q* *1 Cor.* iii. 1, 2. home

home to Christ, and call'd to this sacred Work. *We have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy.*

I would here make two *Remarks* on this Head, before we pass to the next.

1. We may plainly see, that we who are in the *Ministry*, have no reason to *think highly* of ourselves, no reason to be *proud* and *Vain-glorious*. We should indeed take Care to *magnify our Office*, and in no Instances or respects to underact the sacred Character ; but at the same Time, the Language of each of our Souls, must be that of *Job*, *Behold I am vile (r)†*. The Temper of our Minds, and the Tenor of our Lives, should be humble and holy. How should we be *clothed with Humility*, as it were from Head to Foot, who are Ministers of the *meek and lowly Jesus* : How should we watch and pray against Pride, hate and shun this vile *Monster* and this dangerous Snare, this awful *Condemnation of the Devil*. Let us often think, for our Humiliation, *What have we*, that is in any Measure good and valuable, *that we have not received* ? And again, what have we that we have not misimproved ? And as to the Gospel Ministry, it will be a special Guard against Pride, to realize, through Grace, how we came by it, namely, by *meer undeserved Mercy*, and shall we be proud of Mercy ? *We have this Ministry only as we have received Mercy*. Where is Boasting then ? It is excluded.

2. Hence

† “ It is a divine as well as wise and just Remark made by one of the greatest *Masters of Thought* in the last Age, that Persons of *Quality* and Character ought to have two Sets of Thoughts by which to regulate their Conduct : By the *one* they are to view themselves in their State of *distinguishing Elevation*, which is not from Nature, but arbitrary *Establishment* ; by the *other* they are to take a Prospect of themselves in their natural Condition of *Infirmity* and *Equality*, with the rest of Mankind.” (And I may here add, of Sin and Misery.) *Pemberton's Election Sermon*, p. 1.

r Job xl. 4.

2. Hence we may observe Ground of peculiar Encouragement in the Work of the Ministry amidst all the Difficulties that attend it. *We have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy*; and is it a Mercy we have it, and shall we be discouraged with it? Shall we be discouraged with Mercy? *Therefore let us not faint.*

With this Thought we come by an easy Transition, to the 2. *General Head*, under which I am to consider and set before you some of the many *Reasons* and *Arguments* inducing to Faithfulness in the Ministerial Work: And here,

1. The *Command* in God's Word should powerfully and constantly engage to be *faithful* and not *faint* in this great Work. This Command we have in these Words (*J*) *Go ye and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you.* And in another Place, *Take heed to yourselves, and to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made You Overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own Blood.* And again, *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and the Dead at his Appearing, and his Kingdom: Preach the Word, be instant in Season, and out of Season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all Long-suffering and Doctrine. Watch thou in all Things, endure Afflictions, do the Work of an Evangelist, make full Proof of thy Ministry.* With many other Passages to the same Purpose. Surely, my Brethren, the Mind and Will of the Lord, infinitely glorious in himself, and withal our Maker, Preserver, and Governor, Benefactor and Redeemer, thus revealed in his Word, should engage us, through Grace, to chearful, constant and faithful Obedience. *Therefore seeing we have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy, let us not faint.*

2. The

f *Mat.* xxviii. 19, 20. *Acts* xx. 28. *2 Tim.* iv. 1, 2, 5,

2. The *Example of Christ* should animate us in the ministerial Work.

Here we have a perfect Pattern to copy after. The blessed Jesus discover'd from Time to Time the most ardent Love to God and Man in his more public and private Transactions and Ministrations, and sought not his own Glory, but the Glory of him that sent him ; so should we, through his Grace.

How zealous and couragious was he, and yet how prudent and discreet ? How plain and pungent, and yet how compassionate, how regardless of the Flatteries or Frowns of the World ? how meek and lowly of Heart ? how faithful in the Discharge of personal and relative Duties ? how holy and pure ? how resigned to his Heavenly Father's Disposal ? how frequent and fervent in Prayer, and how laborious in his beloved Work ? (t) *I must work*, says he, *the Works of him that sent me, while it is Day*. And again, *My Meat is to do the Will of him that sent me, and to finish his Work*.

How willing was he to do and suffer what he was call'd to, even to the Death ? Oh Sirs ! *Let the same mind be in us, that was in him : Wherefore, holy Brethren, Partakers of the heavenly Calling, let us consider the Apostle and High Priest of our Profession, Christ Jesus ; who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his House (u)*. Let us not then be weary or faint in our minds, or flag in the more difficult Part, or latter Stages of our road ; but may we say, and speak it with Truth, *Seeing we have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy [of the Lord] we faint not*.

3. The *Example of Christ's faithful Servants* in the Ministry should animate us in the Work. 'Tis true, *my Brethren*, the best of Christ's Ministers are imperfect in the present State, and therefore not to be propos'd as perfect Patterns

t John xi. 4. John iv. 34. u Heb. iii. 1, 2.

terns for Imitation ; but we are to be *Followers of them, even as they are of Christ (w)* ; so far as they are so, and no farther. How encouraging is it to observe them, while attended with a Body of Sin and Death, and assaulted by Temptations from the World and the Devil, as we are ; yet, through Grace, approving themselves sincere, and in a good Degree engag'd in their Work.

What a lovely Example is set before us in our Text, and the following Verse ; *Therefore seeing we have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy, we faint not : But have renounced the hidden Things of Dishonesty, not walking in Craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the Truth, commending ourselves to every man's Conscience in the Sight of God.* And again, in the same Epistle, *We do all Things, dearly Beloved, for your Edifying (x).* Our Exhortation, saith this great Apostle of the Gentiles, in another Epistle (y) *was not of Deceit, nor of Uncleaness, nor in Guile, but as we were allowed of God to be put in Trust with the Gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing Men, but God, which trieth our Hearts. For neither at any Time used we flattering Words, as ye know, nor a Cloke of Covetousness ; God is Witness. Nor of men sought we Glory, neither of you, nor yet of others : Being affectionately desirous of You, we were willing to have imparted unto You, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own Souls, because Ye were dear unto us. Ye are Witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among You that believe : And elsewhere (z). I take You to record this Day, that I am pure from the Blood of all men ; for I have not shunned to declare unto You, the whole Counsel of God. Ye know how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto You, but have shewed You, and have taught You publicly*

w 1 Cor. xi. 1. x 2 Cor. xii. 19. y 1 Thes. ii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10. z Acts xx. 26, 27, 18, 20, 31, 24.

lickly and from House to House. Remember that by the Space of Three Years, I ceased not to warn every one Night and Day with Tears. Again speaking of Bonds and Afflictions abiding him, he says, But none of these Things move me, neither count I my Life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my Course with Joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God.

Oh! how willing have the faithful Servants of the dear Redeemer been in the primitive Times, and since, *to keep under their Bodies (a) to live near to God, to spend and be spent in the Service of Christ and of Souls; and even when call'd to it, to seal the Truth with their Blood.*

We have great reason, my Brethren, to bless God, that a considerable Number of the Ministers of the Gospel, in *Great-Britain and America* have, in our Day, been much engag'd in the Cause of God; among these may be reckon'd godly Mr. *Whitefield*, whose *indefatigable and successful Labours*, for almost *twenty Years* together, should be improv'd for the Encouragement and Quickening of all truly engag'd in the sacred Work; whose Name is justly very dear to us: May God Almighty always keep him, with other his Servants, humble; bless them, and make them Blessings, and that more and more abundantly, *to the Praise of his Glory in Christ Jesus.*

While we are musing on these Things, let the *Fire* of Divine Love and Zeal be enkindled in our Breasts, and burn vigorously, that we may be sweetly constrained to say, *Therefore seeing we have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy, we faint not, and, through Grace, we will not faint.*

C

4. The

4. The *Example* of the *holy Angels*, should quicken us in our Work. They are Messengers of the Lord, as their Name imports ; in several respects their Work and ours resemble each other ; no Wonder then, that Ministers of the Gospel are called *Angels* (*b*). It may further be intended by this Appellation, that we should be excited, as far as the Imperfections of the present State admit, to an Imitation of the holy Angels, who are said (*c*) *always to behold the Face of our Father which is in Heaven*, and fly with winged Zeal to execute his Commands, *encamp round about those that fear the Lord*, for their Comfort and Deliverance, and rejoice at the Conversion of Sinners, &c.

Are the Angels heavenly-minded, zealous and faithful in their Work, let us be so in ours, through Grace ; *Therefore, seeing we have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy, let us not faint.*

5. The Industry and Malice, Subtilty and Success of the Devil in his Attempts to ruin Mens Souls, should engage us the more in faithful Endeavours, that they may be rescued and saved ; or in other Words, should quicken us to Diligence in our Work.

We are not ignorant of Satan's Devices (*d*) : Let us then be concerned, that we, and others, especially those under our immediate Care, may be guarded against them.

The Drift of the Spirit of God, in order to the recovery of poor captive Souls out of the Snare of the Devil, is to counter-act, and to guard against his Devices (*e*). The Ministers of the Gospel, as *Workers together with God* (*f*) are

b Rev. i. 20. *c* Mat. xviii. 10. Dan. ix. 9, 21. Ps. c. iii. 20, 21. Psal. xxxiv. 7. Luke xv. 10. *d* 2 Cor. ii. 11. *e* 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. *comp. with* Acts xxvi. 17, 18. *f* 2 Cor. vi. 1.

are engag'd as Instruments to guard against the same Devices, and are especially concern'd that Souls may *not receive* the Gospel of the *Grace of God in vain* (g). Our *Adversary the Devil*, as the Apostle *Peter* observes, *as a roaring Lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*.

Is the Devil, the Enemy of all Good, an Adversary to Souls? Shall not we Ministers of the Gospel be *Friends* to them?

Is he, with his Instruments, set with Boldness, like Lions, against Souls? Sha'n't *we* be courageous as Lions in going through all Difficulties to promote their saving Good? Does he roar with Malice and Wrath against Souls? Sha'n't *we* cry with Fervency to God for them, and cry aloud to them with Bowels of Pity and Compassion, and *beseech them to be reconciled to God*? Does *the Devil* walk about, seeking whom he may devour, and that with awful Success, and shall *we* stick at any Pains, Night or Day, in public or private, at home or abroad, in the Business of our Calling as Ministers, which is to seek whom we may as Instruments save from the Jaws of this devouring Lion, and guide to the regions of Glory? If we, *Brethren*, should faint, the Devil will not; *Therefore seeing we have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy, let us not faint*.

6. *The Worth of Souls* should engage Ministers of the Gospel to Faithfulness in their Work. The great Worth of Souls makes the Devil so eager to destroy them.

This makes the holy Angels engag'd for their Good; this causes *Joy in Heaven* on their *Conversion*. Here are two Worlds at Strife; about what? about earthly Crowns and Scepters? no! these are Trifles. About what then? The

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Souls

Souls of Men, whose Worth is exceeding great. What are *all the Kingdoms of the World, and Glory of them*, in Comparison with the Soul? If you put these in one Scale, and the Soul in the other, they come up light as Vanity itself.

Our Blessed Saviour has determined this Point, both by his Words and Practice; by his Practice, when he pour'd Contempt on the World; but laid down his precious Life, and shed his Heart's Blood, to redeem and save perishing Souls:—By his Words, which are these (b) *What is a Man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?*

Oh! Shall we not be engaged then, agreeable to the Design of our Commission, and from a Sense of the Worth of Souls, in the most painful and faithful Endeavours, through divine assisting Grace, *to open Mens Eyes, and to turn them from Darknes to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God, that they may receive Forgiveness of Sins, and Inheritance among them that are sanctified by Faith which is in Christ. Therefore, beloved Brethren, seeing we have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy. let us not faint.*

7. *Mens Care and Pains about Things of less Worth*, should engage and animate us in our Work†. *How will Men rise up early, and sit up late (i) and eat the Bread of Sorrow and Care, in order to obtain earthly Enjoyments, which perish in the*

† A Soul immortal, spending all her Fires,
Wasting her Strength in strenuous Idleness,
Thrown into Tumult rapur'd, or alarm'd,
At ought this Scene can threaten, or indulge,
Resembles Ocean into Tempest wrought,
To waft a Feather, or to drown a Fly. *Night Thoughts.*

b *Mutthew xvi. 26.* i *Psaln cxxvii. 2.*

the Using. What Pains will Men take, yea, what Hazards will they run, in pursuit of "glittering Gems, gaudy Honors, and shining Dust," which after all are Vanity? How will Men be at vast Expence and Labour, some Way or other, to please and pamper their Bodies, which yet must soon moulder into their kindred Dust; and shall not we be as much, nay more concern'd about their precious Souls, that must surely live forever, either in a State of Happiness, or Misery†? *Therefore seeing we have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy, let us never faint.*

Again, the Sufficiency of Divine Grace held forth to us in the precious Promises of God's Word, should comfort and animate us in our Work. Many and great are our Trials and Difficulties from without and within, and they often meet and join their Forces; we may well say then, *Who is sufficient for these Things (k)?* And we should surely sink, had we not a more than human Prop, at such a Time, a divine Support; such as *Paul* had given him, when afflicted with *a Thorn in the Flesh, the Messenger of Satan to buffet him*: When in this Distress, he besought the Lord thrice, he had this Answer (l) *My Grace is sufficient for thee, for my Strength is made perfect in Weakness*. How is it with *Paul* now? he is kept from fainting, he is refresh'd, he even rejoices and triumphs, and gives God the Glory; *Most gladly therefore, says he, will I rather glory in my Infirmities, that the Power of Christ may rest upon me*. Again he tells us elsewhere,

† Beware what Earth calls Happiness; beware
All Joys, but Joys that never can expire.
Who builds on less than an immortal Base,
Fond as he seems, condemns his Joys to Death.

Night Thoughts,

k 2 Cor. ii. 16. l 2 Cor. xii. 9,

where (*m*) *He can do all Things, through Christ, which strengtheneth him* ; so may we too, living by Faith on the same Mediator of the New Covenant, which is well ordered in all Things, and sure : Let us then trust in the Lord for ever ; in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting Strength (*n*). But what need I enlarge ? Have we not the express Promise of our Lord Jesus Christ to his faithful Ministers (*o*) *Lo, I am with you always, even unto the End of the World. Therefore, seeing we have this Ministry, and these Supports and Encouragements, as we have received Mercy, we faint not.*

Furthermore, *surrounding Dangers* join'd to the last Consideration, should engage us to Faithfulness in our Work. Indeed Dangers in themselves tend to damp and discourage, but when they meet with a Mind prepar'd for them, they serve to quicken and animate. This is remarkable in Persons of a martial Spirit ; I may instance in *Alexander the Great*, who in a Time of great and uncommon Peril, breaks out into this Expression, *Hoc est periculum, par animo Alexandri* : " This is a Danger fit for the Spirit of an *Alexander* " to encounter."

As the Devil would fain ruin Souls, so he would fain keep Ministers of the Word from being faithful ; and often *stands at their Right-hand to resist them* (*p*). The remains of Corruption within us, give great Strength to his Temptations ; and the Difficulty and Danger is increas'd by the World ; I mean by the Fears and the Hopes of the present State. Oh ! what Need have we to live near to God, that we may be well supplied and fortified against these Assaults ; and likewise strength'ned and engaged through Grace, to
pluck

m Phil. iv. 13. *n* Isa. xxvi. 4. *o* Mat. xxviii. 20.
p Zeck. iii. 1.

pluck Souls as Brands out of the Burning, and to use skilfully and faithfully those *Weapons* of Doctrine and Discipline, *which are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong Holds* (q) the strong Holds of Sin, especially Licentiousness and Self-righteousness, and of Satan and the World, who are join'd in a most dismal and dangerous Confederacy.

Again, the *Dangers* that at present *surround our Land and Nation*, should deeply affect us, and engage us in encreasing Zeal, Labours and Faithfulness.

We are indeed blest with very great Privileges both *civil and sacred*, under the Smiles of *indulgent Heaven*, and the mild and just Administration of the *best of Kings*, who may well be stiled a Father of his People ; but the haughty, perfidious and cruel *French*, with their Confederates, are bent upon rending these Privileges if possible from us ; upon destroying our *Lives*, or, which ought to be much dearer to us, *our Liberty and our Religion*.

An holy and righteous God, tho' he has favour'd us with some *remarkable* Instances of undeserved Goodness and Success in the *East* and *North* ; for which we ought surely to return him our most grateful Acknowledgments in Heart, Lip and Life ; yet because of the many and grievous Sins of this Land and Nation has suffer'd our Enemies to gain some Advantages against us, especially in our late *awful* Defeat to the *Westward*.

Thus we see in some Measure what we are when left to ourselves ; but *Wo* will be indeed to us *if God depart from us* (r) and a Deluge of *Popery, Tyranny and Slavery* overwhelm us.

Our Danger is evidently *much* encreased by the aforesaid *terrible* Frown of Divine Providence ; but what makes our
Case

Case most of all *dark and dismal* is this, *viz.* Our continuing in general *stupid and unreform'd, unbelieving and impenitent* under this late *awful* Judgment, added to the *Drought*, and to other Judgments sent before, as well as under the many and great *Mercies and Privileges* we have long enjoy'd, and long *abus'd and misimprovd*, which the Lord in his Providence therefore loudly threatens to take from us, to withdraw his gracious Influence and Protection at once, and what would then be left behind, but *Darkness and Perplexity, Confusion and Horror, Desolation and Misery*?

In this Day of Darkness and Gloominess, *my Brethren*, we should be deeply humbled and penitent ourselves, and faithfully promote others being so. In this Day of *imminent* Danger, let us not fail to sound the *Alarm* with Faithfulness and Compassion, with Plainness and Pungency. Let us *cry aloud, and not spare (f)* let us *shew* to our People, and the People of this Land and Nation, *their Transgressions and their Sins*, Sins against God's Law and against his Grace, &c. and let us, through Grace, be more faithful than ever in our Labours, both in public and private for the good of dear precious Souls: And how should we *Brethren* withal, as *Daniel* successfully did *(t)* *set our Face to the Lord God*, to seek by Prayer and Supplication, with Fasting and Humiliation, and *confessing our Sin, and the Sin of our People*.

Thus let us *stand in the Gap*, as well as *on the Watch Tower*: For *Zion's Sake* we will not hold our Peace, and for *Jerusalem's Sake* we will not rest, until the *Righteousness thereof* go forth as *Brightness*, and the *Salvation thereof* as a *Lamp that burneth (u)*. Therefore seeing we have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy, we faint not, and, thro' Grace, we will not faint.

Several

Several other Arguments engaging to Faithfulness in the ministerial Work, might here be considered, but as I would not be tedious, I purpose to mention them more briefly in a concluding Address, and pass now to the

A P P L I C A T I O N.

1. Hence we learn, what young Men should have a true and just Sense of, who are about to enter upon the Work of the Gospel Ministry; even of these important Arguments and Motives mentioned, and such like.

Surely they ought to *sit down and count the Cost* in the first Place:—It would be extream Folly to do otherwise, and if they do that well, they would by no Means venture on the Work, without a real and spiritual Sense of the Motives engaging to Faithfulness therein; for without that, they might justly expect to faint and fail under the Difficulties of the Work, which are such, as would be too hard for a *Gabriel*, unassisted to grapple with. What Presumption, what Madness is it then, for any one to undertake this Work in his own Strength, which is *Weakness itself*, and will be as *nothing*, when set against the united Temptations of the *World*, the *Flesh* and the *Devil*? How is the poor Soul made an easy Prey, being without God, and without his Grace and Strength secured? and what is like to become then of the miserable Souls he undertakes the Care of?

How awful is it for a Person to promise before *God*, *Angels and Men*, to be faithful in a Work, which is properly spiritual; and which at the same Time he, being *unconverted*, hates, because it is *spiritual*, from the Bottom of his Heart; for the carnal Mind is Enmity against God (w) ‡, †.

w Rom. viii. 7.

D

Is

‡ What greater Solecism than a *Man of God* without true *Godliness*, a *Christian*

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Is not he more likely to make the Hearts of God's People sad, than to feed Christ's *Sheep* and *Lambs*, while he is void of any true Love to Christ (x) ? Is not he more likely to direct poor Souls that are enquiring the Way to Glory into some *Soul-ruining* By-path, especially the Path he is in himself, than to point them to the right road, which he is experimentally an utter Stranger to ?

Oh ! that young Men would be cautious upon this Head, lest they incur the Guilt of Blood to an *amazing* Degree, and pave the Way to a most *aggravated* Condemnation*.

And how careful should the Ministers of the Gospel be, with respect to the Introduction of others into the sacred Work|| :
 x *John* xxi. 15, 16, 17. Tho'

Minister, that is not a *true and real Christian* ; and such none can be without real Regeneration, and true Sanctification wrought in him *by the Renewings of the Holy Ghost* ; which therefore every one that desires to enter into the Holy Office of the Gospel Ministry, or does officiate therein, ought most seriously to enquire into his Experience of ; and not forget, that it is required of a Minister of Christ, that he be *blameless, sober, just, holy, temperate, and that he exercise himself unto Godliness*. Holiness then (even that Holiness without which no Man shall see the Lord) belongs to the Scripture Character of a Steward of God ; and this all un sanctified, unholy Ministers ought to think of with Trembling. In a Word, it appears from the Work, Design, Ends, and Use of the Gospel Ministry, and Scripture Qualifications required of him who officiates therein, that he must be a Man of sincere Piety, and true Godliness.

Pierſon's Sermon on Mr. Dickinson's Death.

† And it seems to me these would act very unadvisedly, that should enter on that great and sacred Work (of the Ministry) before they had comfortable Satisfaction concerning themselves, that they have had a saving Work of God on their Souls. *Edwards's Thoughts concerning the Revival of Religion.*

* We have all of us personal Guilt: enough upon us, let us not add other Mens Guilt to our Account : To be guilty of the Blood of the meanest Man upon Earth, is a Sin, which will cry in your Consciences ; but to be guilty of the Blood of Souls, Lord ! who can bear it ? *Flavel's Treatise of the Soul of Man.*

|| *In the Light of this Truth, we may also read our Duty, how we ought to govern ourselves in the Ordination of Men to the ministerial Office.* This Office is to be committed unto faithful and able Men, 2 *Tim.* ii. 2. Not to Novices, 1 *Tim.* iii. 6. I know the Necessities of the Church are great ; but no more haste (I beseech you) to supply their Wants than good Speed. *Satis celeriter fieri, quickquid commode geritur* : That's soon enough, that's well enough. 'Tis a less Hazard, to put

Though they don't know the Heart ; yet to insist upon sufficient Grounds of Satisfaction, not only that they who offer themselves, are *gifted, learned, orthodox*, and the like, but also that they are *savingly* acquainted with Christ, and truly engag'd to promote his Glory, and the Salvation of immortal Souls.

Is it not expressly requir'd, that the Scripture-Bishop, or Minister of the Gospel, be *boly* (*y*) ? Surely then scriptural and satisfying Evidences of Holiness and divine Grace, should be waited for in this Case ; especially since *Timothy* is plainly directed, and we thereby, *To commit these Things to faithful Men, who shall be able to teach others also* (*z*).

I shall conclude this Head with the mention of what I have seen in a Letter indited by the excellent Mr. *David Brainerd* when on his Death-Bed, and in the near Views of Eternity, he there signifies, that it appeared *exceeding clear* to his Mind, as well as lay with *great Weight* upon it, that there ought to be *great Satisfaction* of the *true Piety* of those we introduce into the sacred Work ; for, says he, " If godly Ministers are left to be *lax* upon this Head, the Number of *ungodly* ones will the faster increase, and these will more readily *strain* a Point, as to the Principles and Practices of those they admit into the Ministry ; and thus the Land may gradually be over-run, not only with the unconverted, but even with heterodox, loose and vicious Ministers ; which *dreadful Evil* may the Lord, of his infinite Mercy in Jesus Christ, make us wise and faithful, through his Grace, seasonably to prevent."

D 2

2. We

y *Tit. i. 8.*z 2 *Tim. ii. 2.*

put an ignorant Rustic into an Apothecary's Shop, to compound and prepare Medicines to Men's Bodies, than to trust a Man destitute both of Faithfulness and Prudence with the Dispensation of Christ's Ordinances to Mens Souls.

Flavel's Sermon on the Character of an Evangelical Pastor.

2. We learn that Ministers of *Jesus Christ* should be *frequently and intensely* fix'd in *Meditation* on these and such like Motives, which are truly weighty, and suited to promote Faithfulness in their Work; and withal be often *wrestling* with Jehovah in the Name of Christ for a deep and steady Sense of them, that we may thus delight in the sacred Work, even when Success is denied, and look upon it still a great Favour and Honor to be allow'd and enabled to speak and act for God in Christ as his Ambassadors; and that we may, if Success be granted, receive it as an *additional* Comfort, and give God the Glory, to whom only it belongs. *Therefore seeing we have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy, we faint not.*

3. Hence the great Propriety and useful Tendency of the Ministers of the everlasting Gospel, especially in their *Presbyterial* and *Synedical* Conventions, their putting each other, in their Turns, in Mind of those great Truths, which tend to establish, comfort and animate them in the great and difficult Work, and through the divine Blessing will have that Effect, and keep them from fainting; especially since Christ is the *great and only* Head and King of his Church, and we all his Ministers are *Fellow-labourers* (a): It cannot then be justly deem'd arrogant, when the meanest and unworthiest of the Ministers of the Gospel, use a plain and pathetic Freedom, as at this Time, with others convened, how much soever superior in Age or Learning, Gifts or Grace; yet with *becoming Respect*.

This naturally leads me to a Word of

E X H O R T A T I O N.

And here I would

1. With all Humility address myself to my *Reverend Fathers* and dear *Brethren* in the Gospel-Ministry conven'd,
a Eph. i. 22. Philem. 24th Verse. whom

whom I reverence, esteem and love, and whom in general I'm persuaded (and rejoice from my *inmost* Soul on the Account) that the God of the Spirits of *all Flesh* has made upright before him, and, in a good Measure, faithful to him, and the Souls of Men, in the great and difficult and yet honourable Work he has call'd them to.

I just mention this, which I can speak with *great Sincerity, and affectionate and dutiful, but just Regard*, to prevent any Misconstruction of the Freedom of Speech I use in this Discourse.

Permit me, *Reverend Sirs*, on this Occasion to congratulate you, that you are call'd; not only to know, but also to *preach the unfearchable Riches of Christ*. Well may we say, *What are we, O Lord, or what is our Father's House? that thou hast brought us hitherto; and that to us this Grace should be given; to us! who are less than the least of all Mercies; yea, to us! who are less than the least of all Saints. Oh! then, have we this Ministry? 'tis only because and as we have received Mercy. Have we furthermore special Supports and Consolations, Assistances and Successes at Times? Still it is as we have received Mercy, and only so; let God then have all the Glory.*

Let us *give Thanks* with our whole Souls, *at the Remembrance of the Divine Holiness, Power and Grace*, display'd at one Time and another, especially about twelve or fifteen Years ago, in a very glorious and wonderful Work of *Conviction and Conversion* of Sinners, as well as *Edification* of God's People; which notwithstanding several unhappy and sad *Extravagances, or Extreames*, which attended the same, we (as a dear *Brother* in the Ministry expresses it) *still dare to call a Work of God*.

Alas !

Alas ! *my Brethren*, that we and others have so much abus'd and misimprov'd this unspeakable Mercy, and provok'd the Lord in such a Measure to depart from us !

And how are we call'd to lament, that *Iniquity awfully abounds* in our Land and Nation ; Infidelity, and many false and corrupt Principles, multiplied ; and gross Immoralities, Profaneness, and Vices of all Sorts, Worldlymindedness and Lukewarmness in religion, Divisions in Church and State, spiritual Sloth and Barrenness, Blindness and Hardness, Ingratitude and Stupidity, under awful Threatnings and Judgments, Presumption and Security, Pride, Self-righteousness, Unbelief, and Opposition to the late glorious Work of God ; and, in a Word, awful Disregard, and even Contempt of God and his Laws, of Christ and his Gospel, and Person, and Grace ; of their own Souls and their Families and others best and eternal Interests : And how are we further called to lament that *the Love of many waxes cold* ? What a general Coldness and Deadness, as to religion, has for some Years prevail'd ; nor can we deny, that the Ministry has been infected herewith ; though, blessed be God, we have some *Revivings in our Bondage*, both as to divine Comforts and Success, and *should not despise the Day of small Things* (b).

Under the *Judgments* we feel or fear, let us be humbled, but not discouraged.

Come, my beloved *Brethren*, let us arise, through Grace, and shake ourselves ; let us, for God's Sake, for Christ's Sake, and for precious Soul's Sake, arise, and shake off remains of Sloth and Backwardness on the one Hand,

Hand, and sinking Discouragements on the other : Let us, in the Lord's Strength, *quit ourselves like Men*, yea, like *Men of God*, in this dark, degenerate and difficult Day. Oh ! what Honor would this reflect on God and religion !

Let us *walk with God*, as *Enoch* did (c) : Let us be valiant, and yet discreet, active and diligent ; *steadfast, and unmovable, fervent in Spirit, and full of the Holy Ghost ; always abounding in the Work of the Lord ; knowing that our Labour is not in vain in the Lord* (d). If we are faithful, and Souls be not gathered, yet we shall be *glorious in the Eyes of the Lord* ;—if they be, then we shall say e'er long, *Lord, here we are, and the Children thou hast graciously given us ; and shall rejoice with them in Glory for ever.*

Oh ! my *Fathers*, my *Brethren*, the *Eyes of Christ*, who will judge the *Quick and the Dead at his Appearing*, and his *Kingdom*, his *Eyes*, I say, which are as a *Flame of Fire* (e) are upon us continually in all Parts of our Work and Conduct, with reference to the final Judgment, and that strict Account we must give at his Bar : And if any of us should then meet with the Doom of the *Slothful Servant*, how dreadful ! how intolerable !——The very Thought is big with Horror ! and Words fail !——

But on the other Hand, how *glorious*, inconceivably *glorious*, is the *Reward* we shall have, if we are faithful, through Grace : Oh ! how shall we exult with *extatic Joy*, when our Lord says to us, *Well done good and faithful Servants, enter into the Joy, the eternal Joy, of your Lord.*

With this Prospect, shall we not most willingly *spend and be spent* in our Work for Christ, and for Souls ? especially considering what Christ Jesus our Lord has done and suffered

ed for us ; and how he has groaned and sweat, bled and died for us on the Cross, that we might live and reign with him in Glory.

Let us further realize the *infinite Glory, Purity and Excellency of Christ, behold him altogether lovely*, and think nothing too much to do or suffer for him, but all vastly too little. Had we a Thousand Lives, and he call'd for them. should we not, with the greatest Freedom and Alacrity, lay them all down, as one speaks fast, as the successive Minutes roll.—But I must hasten.—*Christ's Dying Love* to his Church, as well as to us, should engage us in our great and difficult, yet honorable, profitable and pleasant Work.

Again, the *People of God are helping us by their Prayers*, and holding up our Arms, while we are *doing the Lord's Work*, and *fighting the Lord's Battles* ; and though evil Men *watch for our falling*, this should but make us watch and pray the more, and work the harder, and stand more sure, not in our own, but the Lord's Strength.

Furthermore, *Faithfulness* in our Work, will *express Gratitude* to the blessed Jesus, for calling us to the Knowledge of himself, and for putting us into the Ministry, both which are *very great Mercies* : *Therefore seeing we have this Ministry, as we have received Mercy, let us not faint* ; especially since our Time is short and Death comes hastening on||.

Alas !

|| Shall I squander away what is *unutterably important*, while it lasts, and when once departed, is *altogether irrevocable* ? O ! my Soul, forbear the Folly : Forbear the desperate Extravagance. Wilt thou chide as a *Leiterer*, the Arrow that *boundeth* from the String : or sweep away *Diamonds*, as the *Refuse* of the House ? ---Throw Time away ! Astonishing, ruinous, irreparable Profuseness ! Throw Empires away and be blameless. But O ! be parsimonious of thy Days : husband thy precious Hours. *Hervey's Contemplations.*

Alas ! that so much of our Time is run to Waste, and we have done no more for God : Oh ! then, let us seize the *flying Moments*, and employ them all for God, and Christ, and Souls.

Some of our Number within a few Years past are called home from their *Work* to their *Reward*, from light and *momentary Trials*, to a *far more exceeding, and eternal Weight of Glory*.

Oh ! that a *double Portion of the Spirit* may fall on us who survive, that we may *redeem our Time* in the best Manner, and double our Diligence !

Many Opportunities we have to express our Love to Christ and Souls in this Life, that we shall never have afterwards : Oh ! that we may improve them all, through Grace, to the best Purpose !

Hold out *Faith and Patience*, hold out *Zeal, Activity and Courage*, a little longer, and we shall, *Reverend and dear Sirs*, be with our triumphant Brethren above, and perfectly enjoy, glorify and praise our God and Saviour for ever and ever.

2. I would speak a Word to those of the Children of God who are not in the Ministry. *Brethren ! Pray for us !* (f). Many Difficulties we meet with in our Work ; Oh ! pray, that we may not faint or flag ; but may find the Grace of our God abundantly sufficient, that we may be successful, if it be the Lord's Will ; but, especially, that we may *be faithful to the Death, and then receive a Crown of Life*.

I may say to you as I have heard it was said by those who were going to take *Cape-Breton*, when they parted with their Friends upon the Shore, "Do you *pray* for us, and we will *fight* for you : " Yea, I may say farther, Do you *pray* for us,
f 1 *Thef.* v. 25. E and

and we will *work* for you, and *pray* for you too, through Grace, that you may *grow in Grace*, and in the *Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, that you may *live by Faith* on him, continually *bring forth much Fruit*, adorn your Profession, and ripen apace for Glory ; and Oh ! *Give the Lord no Rest, till he make Jerusalem a Praise and Joy in the Earth*. And, dear Brethren, pray often, and pray earnestly, for *poor, Christless, perishing Souls*.

I would now,

3. Conclude with an Address to *such*.

No small Part of our Work, *my dear Hearers*, who are yet in the dismal State of *Unregeneracy* relates to you ; and many Difficulties, Services and Fatigues we are willing to go through without fainting, out of Love to, and Concern for your precious Souls, if by any Means we may win you over to the Knowledge and Love of God and Christ, and, at least, *save some*.

Oh ! consent to be happy, and to live for ever, and don't *kill yourselves* ; don't *throw yourselves* Body and Soul into Hell : This you *will* do, if you continue in *Sin and Unbelief*.

We come in God's Name to you, and *pray you in Christ's Stead to be reconciled to God* :—We preach the *Terrors* of the Law, as Means suited to awaken and convince you of your sinful, awful State, and absolute *Need of a Saviour* ; and we set before you the *Invitations* of the Gospel, and the Grace, Beauties and Glories of *Immanuel* ; with Desires, that you may, by the Almighty Power and Grace of God, be made willing to receive Christ Jesus, just as he is offered in the Gospel, and rest upon him alone for Salvation : Then, *my Brethren*, you will be inconceivably happy and blessed for ever.

But

But Oh ! if you continue to neglect and refuse Christ, you must perish. *The faithful and true Witness* has declared plainly with his own Mouth, *He that believeth not, shall be damned* (g). If you will go to Hell, after all, from under the glorious Advantages of the Gospel, how aggravated must your Damnation be (h) ? Oh ! can you bear to lie under the dreadful Wrath of the great and terrible God in the Flames of Hell, without one Drop of Water to cool your scorched Tongues ; where the Worm of Conscience never dies, and the Fire is not quenched ; and where you must lie roaring, wailing and gnashing your Teeth, for ever and ever.

Oh ! then rest not in your present Condition ; and, tho' you must take all possible Pains in religion, read, hear, pray, meditate, and, in a Word, strive with all Earnestness, yet don't rest upon that, or think that God is obliged hereupon to save you ; but acknowledge he might most justly after all this, cast you into Hell :—Come therefore as a poor, guilty, empty, vile, sinful, perishing, ill-deserving, and Hell-deserving Creature to a full, glorious and all-sufficient Christ, who is most ready and willing to save. If any Man thirst, let him come to Christ and drink. Oh ! come, poor Souls, here are many of us Ambassadors of Jesus Christ together ; I trust we join most cordially and affectionately in warning you to flee from the Wrath to come, and in calling and inviting you to Christ. Oh ! come before the Master of the House is risen up, and has shut to the Door (i) for then it will be too late for ever. Oh ! don't delay, Thousands have been ruin'd that way. Hear the Lord's Voice, thro' his Grace, To-day : Oh ! let there be Joy in Heaven o-ver you this Day, and then I trust we shall meet e'er long in pure, perfect and eternal Glory : Which may the Lord grant, thro' Jesus Christ ! Amen and Amen.

g Mark xvi. 16. h Mat. xi. 21, 22, 23, 24. i Luke xiii. 25.

F I N I S.

